It Seems to Heywood Broun

The Nation

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The United Press

by Oswald Garrison Villard

The third of a series on

The Press Today

France Wins at London

by Robert Dell

Washington Grinds On

by Paul Anderson

War on the Chain Store

by Harry W. Schacter

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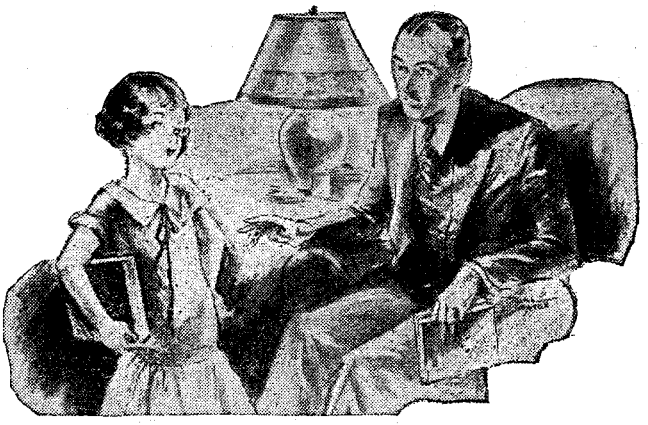

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With an Introduction by
BERTRAND RUSSELL

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SENATOR BORAH was at his best when he opened the attack upon Judge Parker's confirmation. He showed that the judge's reasoning was faulty in the Red Jacket case; that the precedent he cited, the Hitchman case, was not a proper one, thereby demolishing the Parker contention that he was compelled to follow the Supreme Court's reasoning. As for the judge's own defense in his letter to Senator Overman, we find it distinctly weak; indeed, the press dispatches report that it did not help but injured his case. Meanwhile, in addition to the letter we publish elsewhere, we have letters from Congressman Charles A. Jonas of North Carolina and Wyndham R. Meredith, a former president of the Virginia bar, pointing out that the editor of *The Nation* in his letter to "My Dear Senator" on the Parker case failed to note that it was Judge Parker who declared the Richmond anti-Negro segregation ordinance unconstitutional. This is true; it was an oversight. But Judge Parker was clearly bound by the Supreme Court precedents because that body had twice unanimously outlawed two such ordinances. There was no possibility of misinterpreting this precedent. Nor does this affect the fact that in his campaign for the governorship of North Carolina he took the familiar Southern position that Negroes should not be permitted, and do not wish, to participate in politics. We are glad to record the fact that Mr. Jonas and Mr. Meredith praise Judge Parker in the highest terms.

THE AMERICAN DELEGATION has arrived from England blowing its own horn, more than content with its achievements. Let no one, however, be so unkind as to ask any member, publicly or privately, just what contribution or concrete proposal the American delegation advanced beyond Mr. Stimson's fortunately abortive suggestion that by way of disarmament the United States build one more battleship. It is plainly not his fault that we are actually to destroy two of our older vessels of this type. Mr. Stimson himself is coming in for severe criticism from members of the press for his mishandling of the American press representatives in London. Karl Bickel, head of the United Press, has taken the most unusual course of publicly protesting because during the entire conference the American delegates never gave a single "formal interview revealing to the American people any important news facts or affording them to any degree important interpretative background material," although they gave a number of radio talks to the entire country—talks which could not appear in the press for from twelve to thirty-six hours thereafter. Frank Simonds, too, declares that Mr. Stimson held to "a policy of complete and uncompromising silence," and "refused all access to himself in press conferences such as MacDonald gave occasionally and Grandi, Tardieu, and Briand frequently."

BUT THE WORST PERFORMER among our American officials of the London conference is Rear Admiral William A. Moffett, chief of the navy bureau of aeronautics. Having come from the gathering which, so President Hoover, the Admiral's Commander-in-Chief, has informed us, "has been able finally to turn the tide of constantly increasing naval arms and to end the poison of suspicion and ill-will generated by constant rivalry in construction," the Admiral backed up his chief by demanding

> . . . parity in merchant marine. A merchant marine is a large part of sea power. A navy is only part of it. As long as we have a merchant marine inferior to any other nation we will not have parity in sea power. We can gain it by building merchant ships precisely as we build cruisers.

Nothing could, of course, be more calculated to increase "the poison of suspicion and ill-will" than for us to embark upon such a policy—especially in advance of an economic need for any such vessels. As to naval parity, the Admiral had the effrontery to assert that our people, with no previous thought of naval parity, "have recently demanded it, and there is every indication that we will have it by 1936. It is necessary in order to retain our self-respect"! Could anything more completely justify our statement of last week that the conference has probably done nothing really to chasten the naval mind?

HERBERT HOOVER, ECONOMIST, certainly plays the part powerful poorly by comparison with Calvin Coolidge. The latter consistently gloried in the title of penny-pincher, and the public service often suffered grievously in consequence. But President Hoover preaches alternately the gospel of salvation from depression by spend-

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ing and salvation from deficit by saving. First we were treated to a public-buildings program that was to give every unemployed man a job by spending $175,000,000 additional over a period of ten years. Then on February 24 Congress was solemnly warned not to pass bills (which it had not the slightest intention of passing) which would involve expenditures of $1,735,000,000 in excess of the budget. Next day Congress expressed its opinion of the President, who in reply assured Congress that he referred, not to Congress, but to the extravagant folks back home. On April 4 he signed (with two pens) a measure appropriating "the largest amount for road-building ever sanctioned in a single measure," and on the same day forecast a deficit for 1931 and called for the "most rigid economy and deferment of otherwise justifiable expenditures." On April 22 he again scolded Congress for 125 bills that it has not passed but that would increase his deficit by $350,000,000 if it did pass them, and in the same breath expressed approval of supplemental public-buildings appropriations for 1931 totaling more than $28,000,000. There is certainly nothing like having an economist for President—except having a juggler.

THE WILY AND INDEFATIGABLE M. Briand, if a recent Paris dispatch to the New York *World* is to be believed, found time during the naval conference at London to push forward the United States of Europe project. One of the objects of M. Briand's diplomacy at London, according to this authority, was to force Ramsay MacDonald to admit, in the presence of the American delegation, that Great Britain was after all one of the European Powers, that it had, like France, rather definite and important obligations to the League of Nations, and that it was not, because it could not be, an independent umpire in European differences—a job open to the United States. Meantime, presumably in the long intervals in which there was nothing else to do, M. Briand and his associates worked out a questionnaire which will shortly be sent to some twenty-six European states, asking them what they are prepared to do in the way of lowering tariff duties, furthering the cartel movement for the grouping and control of industries and natural resources, and so on. Of course there is nothing in this, not a single thing, antagonistic to America. But if the astute French diplomatist does not give his proposed U. S. E. a twist that will make American business penetration of Europe much more difficult, he will be a bigger altruist than his warmest friends have ever asserted that he was.

ALL TANGLED UP and nowhere to go was the happy state of the Senate recently after a two-days' bout with the national-origins provision of the pending immigration bill. On Tuesday, April 22, it voted to repeal the national-origins clause, thereby automatically reestablishing the quota basis, but an unamended part of the bill was also changed so as to cut the quota basis from 2 per cent to 1 per cent. It was also proposed to reduce the total annual immigration from about 150,000 to 80,000. The supporters of the national-origins clause, who see in it a greater obstacle to immigration than the quota basis presents, thereupon rallied their forces and on Thursday, by a margin of a single vote, the Senate voted to send the bill back to the Committee on Immigration, thereby putting itself on record as opposed, at least until it has another thought, to doing away with the national-origins stipulation. As the matter stood at that stage the bill appeared to provide for both systems, with the promise, according to immigration officials, of chaos in administration. The national-origins provision is tolerably acceptable to old countries which for years have furnished large numbers of immigrants, and highly objectionable to new countries some of which have not been many years in existence. As the bill that was recommitted is especially obnoxious to Latin America and has hanging over it the intimation of a veto, the committee may decide to put it in cold storage until December.

PUBLIC UTILITY REGULATION is to be the issue in New York State if Governor Roosevelt has his way. The Republican majority in the legislature passed a whole flock of little bills tinkering the Public Service Commission Act in minor particulars, but rejected out of hand the recommendations of the minority of the Knight Commission, put forward with the Governor's tacit approval, proposing a really serious scheme of rate control. This minority would set aside by legislative declaration the slippery concept of "reasonable return on a fair value of the property." Providing for an initial valuation of property now in use, which once accepted is to be final, it would have further additions to the property valued at actual cost. The rate of return, to be determined by the commission, is likewise to remain fixed. Utility investors will then know what they may expect to get and consumers what they must pay, and utility properties will cease to be the happy hunting grounds of financial pirates. As John Bauer demonstrated in his notable book, "Effective Regulation of Public Utilities," regulation, if it is ever to be effective, must take some such form as this. The companies promptly smashed the minority proposals and at the same time accepted innocuous amendments to the existing ineffective law, thus affording additional evidence in support of the growing conviction that effective regulation is impossible. We sincerely hope that Governor Roosevelt will push his campaign for the minority utility program with all vigor.

EVERYTHING that comes out of Columbus makes worse the calamity at the Ohio State Prison. No one asserts now that the fire which killed 320 convicts was started by them. The city firemen have testified that every life lost could have been saved if there had been prompt efforts to release the prisoners. There have been vigorous convict protests against the regime of the warden, who is charged with brutality, with the result that he called in the National Guard on April 28 and put fifty prisoners into punishment cells. As we go to press news dispatches state that after guards had fired on unruly prisoners in their cells, State troops were called out to quell the riot. Warden Thomas has put the blame on the Ohio Legislature for its refusal to heed his demands for additional and adequate accommodations, and there can be no doubt that his censure is merited. It is the State of Ohio which is arraigned at the bar, and the only question is whether its public conscience will demand action or whether the Executive and the legislature will wait until the storm blows over and then do nothing. Meanwhile, in Dannemora, leaders of the last riot have been for nine months in solitary confinement with no work to do, and the warden of the New

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Jersey State Prison at Trenton declares that "no power in God's heaven can prevent rioting under conditions we are facing at the prison." There are 1,658 prisoners there confined in 1,115 cells. There are 700 idle men occupying cells twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four, and the warden declares that "nobody knows when the lid will blow off."

LORD IRWIN has revived press censorship in India. It is true that the native nationalist press is very sensational and provocative, but it has been so for a long time, and the fact that the Viceroy feels that he must employ the weapon of suppression indicates the seriousness of the present situation. The report of comparative quiet on the Afghan frontier, where twenty Indians were recently killed in a riot, may be as much the result of censorship of foreign dispatches as of any actual calm. Meanwhile, the sparks of revolt grow thicker and more widespread. Each day brings news of more deaths, more arrests, and more ominous fervor, particularly on the part of Gandhi's immediate followers. At Karachi, as a British war plane circled overhead, a pile of foreign cloth fifteen feet high went up in flame and smoke while women chanted hymns of sedition. V. I. Patel has resigned his post as Speaker of the Indian Legislative Assembly and it is reported that government has practically ceased in the Gujarat district where Gandhi's campaign was inaugurated. Now Gandhi, in a statement which seems hardly consistent with his program of non-violence, threatens to capture a government salt depot, a move which the government could hardly ignore. Latest and most significant news declares that a mutiny has occurred in at least one of the native regiments.

EFFICIENCY and conservatism have marked the first month of the Bruening Cabinet in Germany. The ministerial declaration, read to the Reichstag on April 1, was a clear intimation that unless the wrangling and dilatoriness that had characterized the regime of Chancellor Mueller were promptly replaced by attention to government business, the Reichstag would be dissolved and a new election ordered. The accomplishments since then have been remarkable. Only about two weeks were needed to force through the Reichstag the Government bills imposing new taxes and laying new import duties on food—a record speed in German parliamentary history. Incidentally, Chancellor Bruening has abandoned the secrecy which the Mueller Cabinet affected, and has carried issues of policy directly before the Reichstag and fought them out on the floor in open debate. It is significant that the Hugenberg Nationalists have felt compelled to excuse and defend the thirty-one members who supported the Government on the food duties. The swing toward the Right, on the other hand, is evident not only in the decision of the Government to go ahead with a second cruiser of the Ersatz Preussen type, but also in the virtual dropping of the quarrel with Thuringia over Fascist control of the Thuringian state police. The Left parties, of course, are unhappy, but the Socialist opposition has been a good deal discounted by the apparent disposition of the Nationalists to give the new Government a chance.

A TRANSCONTINENTAL railroad 1,700 miles long, built from Siberia to Turkestan in four years and finished three months ahead of time—this is the latest feat of the Bolsheviks. It ought to give pause to those who portray the Soviet leaders as mere wild visionaries, for it dramatically illustrates the creative powers of the men in charge of the Soviet government, their grim determination to drive through with their tasks, and the speed with which they are modernizing Russia. Had such a railroad been undertaken by the Czar it would certainly have been financed by French money, would have taken a dozen years to finish, and would have reeked of graft and corruption. More interesting still is the fact that this railroad has been put into operation ahead of time by "Bill" Shatov, a former Chicago hobo, I. W. W., and Communist, who worked at a dozen different trades in this country and saw the inside of numerous American prisons. Yet he has successfully commanded an army of 500,000 laborers and 200,000 camels. The road, whose entire equipment from rails to engines has been made in Russia, parallels the Chinese border for 700 miles, unites Siberia with Turkestan, and meets the trans-Siberian at Novosibirsk. As a whole it staggers the imagination.

ANOTHER AMERICAN INVASION of Europe! This time it is the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under the leadership of Arturo Toscanini. We have no doubt that the orchestra will win golden laurels and will be acclaimed with that generous appreciation which forgets national boundaries. Undoubtedly Europe will be amused that there are only two purely Anglo-Saxon names on the roster of the orchestra, but at least 58 per cent are American citizens and the balance have taken out their first papers. They represent well what private American generosity can do and is doing for the fine arts. Incidentally, it is interesting to note the remarkable experience that the orchestra had at a reception given to the players by Mrs. Vincent Astor just before they sailed. She employed a jazz orchestra to entertain them and it is reliably reported that some of the orchestra heard this strange music for the first time and that Toscanini himself looked at the jazz performers with puzzled curiosity and said: "What is it they are trying to do?" He was deeply impressed when told that one of these performers may earn as much in a night as some of his Philharmonic musicians do in a week.

SCHOLARSHIP SUFFERS a severe loss in the death of Horace H. Furness, Jr., editor, as was his father before him, of the Variorum Shakespeare. Dr. Furness began his career as an instructor in physics, shortly after his graduation from Harvard in 1888. Although his father, with his mother's constant help, was occupied year in and year out with the great dramatist, the son for more than ten years resisted that powerful influence. But in the end he succumbed. In 1901 he gave up his teaching and became coeditor of the series. The first play he edited was the revised edition of "Macbeth"; subsequently he issued "Richard III," "Julius Caesar," and "King John." Nineteen plays, including two volumes on "Hamlet," have now been issued in this careful, exhaustive, and definitive manner. And what a tribute to a poet and dramatist that for more than fifty years a family of scholars could be busy on half of his work, not forming opinions in a windy way about what he meant when he wrote a certain passage, but collating all the multifarious things that had been written about him since his plays first appeared in print.

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Law the Servant of Life

THE strong opposition to the appointment of Mr. (now Chief Justice) Hughes and Judge Parker to the Supreme Court of the United States is highly encouraging. It indicates at once the profound respect that the people have for their highest court and the growing understanding of what it is that this great tribunal actually does. Spokesmen for the property-owning groups that profit by recent decisions of the court have tried to instil in the popular mind a bogus reverence for that body, picturing its members as a race of legal demi-gods that move through an atmosphere of rarefied abstract justice to decisions that are therefore immune from criticism. The present revolt is a measure of the failure of such special pleading. What the American people respect, and respect profoundly, is not this fiction, but the reality of the court—a group of honest and wise old men learned in the law, applying their collective knowledge and wisdom to the settlement of the controversies that arise in a complicated modern industrial state, at the same time that they maintain the continuity of legal development. Whatever the weaknesses of our government machine, our Supreme Court has served us magnificently. The current opposition to President Hoover's nominations is a tribute to that service.

No opponent of the appointment of Mr. Hughes questioned for a moment his eminence as a lawyer, his integrity as a man, or his experience as a public servant. The objection to Judge Parker has not been based primarily on legal grounds, though there is frank and outspoken doubt that he possesses either the intellectual distinction or the legal learning necessary to a great judge. Essentially his critics maintain that on two great questions of social policy, the Negro question and the labor question, he has taken a stupid and reactionary position, and that he cannot be trusted, therefore, to perform intelligently the exacting duties of a justice of the Supreme Court. Similarly, Mr. Hughes was opposed for his narrowly legalistic defense, during all his recent years, of the giant property interests that rule us today and threaten to ruin us tomorrow. The opposition is thus, to a certain extent, a protest against an undue conservatism on the part of the court, and we trust that President Hoover will heed the warning against a further packing of that tribunal with hard-shell economic and social conservatives.

But the real question goes much deeper than that. Since Woodrow Wilson left the White House there have been seven nominations to the Supreme Bench, including Judge Parker. Of these, Justice Stone, no radical in economic theory, is yet a profound student of social life, who may be trusted to weigh wisely and comprehendingly the varied economic, political, and legal considerations that actually enter into the determination of the important questions faced by the court, and to go skilfully through the necessary legal motions of making the decisions and rendering the accompanying opinions. He is of the stuff of which great Supreme Court justices are made. Of the other six selections of the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover era it is scarcely too much to say that not one of them has displayed any real understanding of what he is actually doing. We do not say this because we disagree so commonly with the economic and social theories and prejudices of these judges. Those theories and prejudices in themselves are relatively unimportant; what is enormously important is that they be not unconsciously and in good faith written into the law, for the political consequences of such action may be grave in the extreme.

The Supreme Court in fact, as opposed to theory, is constantly deciding economic and political questions of the highest moment and is deciding them, to put the thing flatly and extremely, just as other men decide them, on the basis of the best judgment it can form of all the probable consequences involved. It uses so-called legal principles as tools in helping it decide these questions, but the principles do not automatically decide the questions, as some uninformed persons would have us believe. May a State restrict hours in mines to eight per day? The court thinks such a restriction good and justifies it on the ground of the State's police power. May a State restrict hours in bakeshops to ten per day? The court thinks such a restriction bad, and invalidates it on the ground that it interferes with freedom of contract. There is absolutely nothing in the legal principles of police power and freedom of contract that required the cases to be decided as they were. The decisions might equally well have been the opposite, and then the court would simply have reversed its choice of principles in support of its decisions. Take the long list of tax cases, trust cases, railroad and utility valuation and rate cases, labor cases, cases on social protective legislation, cases on the civil rights of Negroes, aliens, Communists, pacifists, what you will. In each case the court is deciding a controversy in such a way as to bring, if possible, a reasonable equilibrium of clashing forces, and thus to keep peace and order. As Justice Holmes has repeatedly pointed out, such matters are not to be settled by any debate over abstract legal principles; for they are questions of public policy, on which the court finds guidance, indeed, in the acts of legislatures and other indications of public opinion, but which are not in themselves legal questions. It is to questions like these that the Supreme Court gives the final answer, and its supreme task is to give an answer that fundamentally represents the will of the people, the actual distribution of power in the state.

In performing this function the Supreme Court must also insure the continuity and development of the law, and the great judge is he who does his appointed task in full understanding of all his responsibilities and powers. He must possess not only sound legal learning, but also intelligence, understanding, broad sympathy with all classes of men, social awareness. It is the possession of these qualities, not the holding of radical theories, that makes of Justice Holmes the great judge he is; in fact he does not hold radical theories. We do not ask for radical judges; we do not need them. We do ask for understanding judges; we need them sorely for the salvation of the court itself and the continued performance of its all-important function in our constitutional scheme. May Mr. Hoover in his further appointments seek out judges who understand that law is the servant of life; that the court is the servant of all the people.

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Political Discount Rates

MR. PAUL M. WARBURG is one of our leading bankers; he is one of the fathers of the Federal Reserve Act, and he served for four years as a member of the Federal Reserve Board. For these reasons alone the recommendations in his new work on the Federal Reserve system* would deserve serious consideration. The most important of these recommendations is that the Secretary of the Treasury should cease to be a member ex officio of the Federal Reserve Board, much less its chairman. With great moderation of statement Mr. Warburg offers the a priori reasons which make such a change desirable. Dominant political parties, he points out, have always been known to pray and work for "good times" and "prosperity" during the period in which they are in power. The Federal Reserve system, on the other hand, must be willing to check a wave of unhealthy overspeculation threatening to disturb the stability of prices and credit and bound ultimately to inflict severe losses upon the country. The success or failure of the system lies in a timely grasp and in a fearless handling of such dangerous conditions. Yet it is impossible to hope that a party administration would be found willing to undertake the painful and ungrateful task of temporarily checking "prosperity"—even though it were only a sham prosperity—for the purpose of preventing a grave disaster threatening to occur in the future. The reserve board, therefore, should above all be politically independent.

Yet the fact that the Secretary of the Treasury is chairman of the reserve board gives him, in addition to the prestige to which his office entitles him, a dominant position in discussions of the board's affairs, and as the prestige and importance of his office increase, that of the governor loses in importance, not only in the estimation of the public, but also in that of his colleagues and the officers and directors of the reserve banks. Further, the President's power to reappoint or dismiss members of the board, and to make or unmake its governors and vice-governors, is one in the exercise of which he is, naturally, largely guided by his Secretary of the Treasury, and this makes it doubly difficult for board members to maintain their independence in the face of the Administration's wishes. The influence of the Secretary of the Treasury is still further enhanced by the ex officio membership of the Comptroller of the Currency, who administers his own department as an appointee of the Treasury and under its control.

As a result political leaders have come to consider the reserve system as, in Mr. Warburg's words, "an instrumentality of the government":

> From the beginning, achievements of the reserve system in operation have been hailed as accomplishments of the party in power, or of a secretary of the treasury. Some administrations have even gone so far as to claim credit for the lowering of discount rates, and secretaries of the treasury have spoken as if the policy of the board were a concern of the President's Cabinet.

Mr. Warburg points out that as one of the consequences of this condition it has become difficult to secure men of the highest type to serve on the board. Among the changes he suggests are that the Undersecretary of the Treasury, instead of the Secretary, serve as ex officio member of the board; that the Comptroller of the Currency be either removed entirely from the board or that his office, in so far as it deals with the affairs of the member banks, be put under the control of the reserve board; and that the board itself appoint its governor and vice-governor, preferably by a system of rotation which would allow every appointive member to serve during the last two years of his term. Another suggestion is that the reserve banks be given the power to delegate four men to the reserve board, each of these to be elected by the combined directorates of a group of three reserve banks.

As if to point the need for these or similar changes comes the Federal Reserve Board's latest annual report. It makes official admission of what had already been commonly known—that in the early part of 1929 the board "did not approve the discount-rate advances voted by some of the Federal Reserve banks." Put bluntly, this means that the board, dominated by political timidity, refused to allow the best banking opinion of several districts to apply the one remedy that could possibly check one of the most flagrant orgies of stock speculation in our history. Conservative banking opinion recognizes that again and again rediscount rates have been kept artificially low, to encourage, or at least not to discourage, a rising stock market. It is time that the Federal Reserve Board was thought of as something more than a convenient instrument to help win the fall elections.

* "The Federal Reserve System." By Paul M. Warburg. The Macmillan Company. 2 vols. $12.

Labor in Travail

HAVING himself cut loose from the Independent Labor Party a short time ago, Ramsay MacDonald now finds the party trying to cut loose from him. At the Birmingham congress of the party, on April 22, the "rebels," as they are called, drew their garments about them and announced that they could have nothing to do with the financial policy of the Government. There was nothing surprising in this, for the revolt had been for some time foreshadowed. The unemployment bill and other Government measures have repeatedly been opposed by Independent members of the House of Commons, and on April 15, four days before the Birmingham congress met, the leader of the party, James Maxton, arraigned the Snowden budget as something which would have been quite respectable if the Tories or Liberals had produced it, but which as a Labor Party document was a "flat betrayal" of Socialist principles.

Whether this open defection involves any immediate danger to the MacDonald Government is not clear. Nearly 200 of the 289 Labor members of the House are claimed by the Independents, but only 37 candidacies were directly supported financially by the party in the last election, and the Maxton group in the House numbers only 30. As the Lloyd George Liberals are preparing to support the Government on the budget, the loss of thirty Independent votes should be more than made good from the fifty-nine Liberals in the House even though some of the Liberals remain in opposition. Moreover, the Maxton following is not entirely

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dependable, as appeared when only eight of the number voted against the recent appropriations for the army and navy notwithstanding the instructions of the party.

Nevertheless, the congress sharpened a line of cleavage which Mr. MacDonald cannot safely ignore. The temper of the congress was aggressively radical—more radical, in fact, than that of Mr. Maxton, who is a good deal of a fire-eater. The Government was attacked for not living up to the slogan "Socialism in Our Time," and for aiding capitalism by inviting bankers and corporations to assist in reorganizing industry. Mr. Maxton and his supporters want socialism here and now, not in some indefinite future, and they believe that it can be had without bloodshed. Insurance and pension benefits four times greater than are now available, heavier taxes on large incomes and confiscatory death duties on certain large estates, and government operation of the Bank of England are among their radical proposals.

Such a program is hardly likely to make much headway in the Commons or in the country, but it points to a fundamental weakness in Mr. MacDonald's position. Mr. MacDonald is very much more of a Socialist in theory than he has shown himself to be in practice. A Socialist England may still be his ultimate aim, but he is willing to wait a long time for it. The ease with which the Liberals have made a working peace with the Labor Government suggests that labor is not regarded as offering a serious menace to capitalism. If the Government should meet defeat on the budget it will not be, we may be sure, because the budget does not go far enough in extracting money from the rich or near rich, but because its burdens are greater than the Liberals, who must vote for it if it is adopted, will stand.

Mr. MacDonald's position on the eve of the budget debate is one of mingled weakness and strength. He will profit a little from the dissensions in the Independent Labor Party, and from the inability of that party to go much farther in the direction of radicalism without identifying itself, in public opinion, with communism and revolution. The fact that the naval conference did not actually go to pieces, that a British guaranty of French security has been avoided, and that the financial burden of naval armament for the next few years will not be any greater and may be somewhat less, is all to the good as far as the MacDonald Government is concerned. The recent commercial agreement with Russia will please some of the Labor Party supporters and some sections of the British public, and the negotiations with Egypt may turn out happily. None of these props, however, will bear much strain. The uprising in India is a heavy and sorrowful load for the Government to carry, especially with a pacifist Prime Minister who knows that India can be kept down only by using force. The naval treaty at its best offers only poor pickings for an optimist, and the so-called safeguarding provision opens the way to sending to the scrap-heap at any moment the whole arrangement of parity, reduction, limitation, and the like if Italy or France raises the cry that its security is threatened and starts building. One would indeed be venturesome who asserted that the recent unemployment legislation will banish the unemployment nightmare or that the coal bill carries an assured solution of the problems of mine workers or mine owners. It is an uneasy situation, and one that will test Mr. MacDonald's leadership more severely than it has been tested hitherto.

Poetry and Laurel

WE do not envy the man or men whose duty it will shortly be to name the successor of Robert Bridges as poet laureate of England. If the office is taken at all seriously, as perhaps it should not be, the difficulty of filling it should be taken seriously, too. For the incumbent needs to be something else besides a good poet; he needs to be an equivalent of what in the old days before Elizabeth was called a court poet—a poet attached to the royal household and suitable in every way to its temper. Now that the English court is less important than it used to be, he should be at least a poet understandable by the people upon whose sentiments the sun never sets. He should be, shall we say, an empire poet—or at any rate some very good sort of Englishman whose behavior in his books, not to speak of his life, will cause no discomfort in the high places of the national heart.

But good poets are likely not to be conforming men, though of course they may be. Poetry and laurel do not always mix, especially when by some mischance a branch has been broken from that kind of laurel whose leaves give off a bitter odor when bruised, and exude a deadly poison. One horn of the dilemma is a brilliant poet whose ideas would be offensive to respectable persons; the other horn is a respectable poet whose work would be called contemptible by the knowing few. How to choose, or rather how to avoid the necessity of such a choice? Wordsworth and Tennyson were both good poets and blameless men at the time of their appointment. Is England so lucky now?

At least there are plausible candidates. The suggestion will probably not be made, as it was made after the deaths of Thomas Warton, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, to abolish the office as a compliment to the laureate late deceased. Robert Bridges was not that great; and besides there are worthy men in sight. Ruling out T. S. Eliot, who is in all likelihood the best poet living in England today but who is an American, and passing over Robert Graves, who is an especially gifted Englishman but who would certainly prove embarrassing through his indifference to decorum, there is first of all Mr. Kipling. There may be reasonable doubts of his importance to poetry, yet he has an importance of a kind, and he has the advantage of being universally known. There is the practical advantage also of his being patriotic—this in spite of certain indiscretions which are said to have prevented him from appointment after Alfred Austin's death, and which he may have managed to live down. Certainly he would be preferable to Sir Henry Newbolt, another patriotic poet who has been suggested.

There is A. E. Housman, of course, who perfectly fills the narrow niche of elegy. There is Alfred Noyes, who in his youth was promising and who of late years has been talking like a laureate in his lectures and his essays. And there is John Masefield. It would not surprise us to see Mr. Masefield crowned, for although he has passed his prime he has passed it with honor, and his sentiments are unexceptionable. But we shall make no predictions. We shall only rest in the assurance that the laureateship need not sink this time to the level to which it sank with Nahum Tate, William Whitehead, H. J. Pye, and Alfred Austin.

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It Seems to Heywood Broun

A LABOR controversy of great interest is simmering at the moment and yet you will find it but meagerly reported in the columns of the newspapers. Mention is slight because this dispute happens to concern the publishers and the printers. Journalism has not yet quite grown up to the realization of the fact that even things which happen within the shop deserve to be classified as news and treated as such. The controversy has elements not usual in the clashes between capital and labor. For instance, this time it is the employers who are offering an advance in wages while the workers, refusing that, are endeavoring to gain something a little different. The fight centers around the demand for the five-day week. This would include the provision for the six-day wage scale to be paid for the shorter period, so in a sense it does represent a request for higher pay. It is quite true that the new arrangement would add something like 15 per cent to the costs which the publishers would have to shoulder.

There need be no question that the typographical union is in earnest. Among the oldest of the organized trades, it has become within the last twenty years one of the most conservative. Indeed, it would not be unjust to say that the printers have been a trifle timid. At one time this body numbered in its ranks the intellectuals of the labor movement and it contributed many of the aggressive leaders of trade unionism. Of late years it has lost prestige. Somehow or other the practice of setting up fine, whacking stand-pat editorials had a subtle effect upon the compositors themselves. The ink of let-well-enough-alone seeped into the pores and finger tips of employees.

But things are no longer well enough in the printing trades. I am not in a position to predict whether the members of the union will vote for a strike if and when they receive permission from their international officials to take such action. I think that such a contingency is likely. In that event New York, and possibly Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia, will be reduced to the necessity of getting along with small-sized leaflets representing the enforced cooperative effort of all the publishers in each city. If the issue is not drawn now it must be soon, because the printers are increasingly being forced into a position where they must fight for existence. What was one of the strongest unions in the country now finds a vast number of its members out of work. They are the victims of efficiency. Did you ever stop to think what became of the printers as a result of the merger movement among American newspapers?

Nor is the end of this policy of large-scale production in sight. When two papers merge, the combined mechanical staff can be cut almost 50 per cent. In every shop today hundreds of subs are hanging about eager to pick up part-time employment. Moreover, one or two labor-saving devices are close to practicability which would still further cut down the jobs open to typographers. Accordingly, the union must face the necessity of creating more jobs. Already it has tried to do that by urging its members to avail themselves freely of the privilege of taking a night off in order to make work for the men upon the fringe. But such voluntary effort cannot take up the slack. It is well to remember that if the five-day week is put into effect it will not merely be a proposition of the printer's working on the sixth day and collecting overtime. Even now the practice of working seven days for the sake of the extra stipend is rigorously forbidden and you can depend upon it that the five-day week will mean just that. The extra day will mean extra employment for men now working with great irregularity.

Some of the publishers are willing to admit that conditions justify the logic of the union. Many are willing to concede the possible utility of the five-day week, but the argument of the employers runs: This still remains an economic experiment. Why should it be made at our expense? The public has been informed through the medium of the official statement of the publishers that arbitration was offered and refused by the union. This is a somewhat misleading statement. Certain rights already won and certain organic laws of the typographers would come into the scope of such arbitration and the union is loath to expose privileges already gained to new decision. Nor is there any acute willingness to arbitrate the five-day week itself, which is the crux of the argument. It is well to remember that this demand is by no means brand-new. As far back as 1922 the demand was first introduced and again, somewhat more emphatically, in 1925.

Nor is the five-day week wholly within the experimental stage. The needle trades and the building industry have already ceded the principle and Henry Ford, whose shops are not organized, has also recognized its utility. In the long run I feel certain that the wide introduction of the five-day week would be a very vital tonic for the restoration of national prosperity. Newspapers are peculiarly sensitive to business conditions in general, and though the original cost of the new arrangement might be high the final and very speedy result would be increased profits for the counting-rooms.

Sooner or later, and much better sooner, industrial leaders must recognize the fact that our present unemployment situation is not going to get better over night. The original belief that the whole thing might be cleared up by a few cheerful words from Washington is no longer tenable. We have begun to deal with technological unemployment. Mergers and new inventions have done their work. They are useful only if the labor saved goes directly into a shortening of working time all along the line. As a matter of fact, newspaper publishers are not without opportunity to compromise. I have reason to believe that the printing trades might be induced to accept a three-year delay in the granting of the five-day week if only the promise is definitely made that it shall become effective at the end of that time. Also the union would probably accept some slight reduction in the wage scale if the five-day week were granted. Publishers should not think of themselves as the "goats" in the matter. It would be better to accept the opportunity to assume leadership and adopt a new standard of working time which is actually vital to the welfare of the country.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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Washington Grinds On

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, April 26

DAY and night a dread specter haunts the White House, deepening the fears and forebodings which in recent months have transformed a naturally sunny and scientific nature into one pervaded by gloom and disillusionment. The specter is the memory of what happened to the Taft Administration. If there was a rift in the clouds when the Sage of Northampton announced himself as being definitely out of the picture, it was but momentary, because the present disposition in Presidential circles is to trust nobody, and especially to trust no professional politician—such as Calvin certainly will be until the inevitable day when God calls him home. Hoover realizes definitely, and at last, that he is "in bad" with the country. He has lost, to a very large extent, the confidence of the business community to which he always made a special appeal for support, and, what is more alarming, he has lost the confidence of local Republican leaders throughout the country. Among the latter the impression is spreading that the President is a poor judge of men, that he is unlearned in the elemental rules of the political game, and that he has no talent for avoiding embarrassing situations and no skill in disentangling himself from them. Among the former there is a growing suspicion that his reputation as an economist is largely founded on bluff and ballyhoo. I should not marvel if there were some truth in these conclusions, and I shall not be surprised if they come to be more widely held.

* * * * *

THE Muscle Shoals lobby, defeated in the Senate and discredited before the public, still has powerful friends in the House of Representatives, where men are sheep and representative government is a humorous phrase. There a neat conspiracy is in progress to smother the Norris resolution, recently adopted by the Senate, providing for public operation of that great public property. The well-packed Committee on Military Affairs has laid aside the Norris measure and designated a subcommittee to draft a substitute plan for leasing the plant to private interests. Since everyone knows there is not the faintest prospect of getting such a bill through the Senate, the purpose obviously is to delay a settlement until public indignation subsides sufficiently to permit the power and chemical interests to take another crack at the proposition. It will be interesting to observe the course taken by the Rules Committee, of which the Honorable Bertrand H. Snell, himself a power magnate, is chairman, when the question of permitting a vote comes before it. The one man who can upset this scheme of obstruction and delay is President Hoover. Failure to upset it will be adequate proof that he concurs in its object.

* * * * *

THE immensely diverting crusade of Senator Joseph R. Grundy to rescue his beloved Pennsylvania from boss rule and corruption soon will have issue in the form of a Senate investigation of campaign methods and expenditures in the Republican Senatorial primary there. To outsiders it may be explained that boss rule and corruption are represented, in the Grundy dramatization, by the Vare Gang and Secretary of Labor Davis, while purity and democracy are personified by "Holy Joe" himself and Secretary of the Treasury Mellon. Since the ironic gods have elected to have the investigating committee headed by Senator Nye, a "wild jackass" from the extremely "backward State" of North Dakota, the members will have no choice but to don gas-masks and dig in. Horrifying charges of venality and intimidation already have been exchanged between the hosts of "Holy Joe" and the hordes of "Puddler Jim"; investigators are ready to proceed to the scene; and presently the less important sections of the country will have an object lesson in political morals as held and practiced in enlightened Pennsylvania. Incidentally, the committee possesses information of certain curious activities in Nebraska. Somebody out there has taken the unusual trouble of conducting a State-wide straw vote to determine who would make the strongest campaign against Senator Norris in the Republican primary. As readers of the *Literary Digest* know, such polls are expensive, and it is widely reported that $60,000 was made available to defray the cost of that in Nebraska. The Senate committee will want to know who paid for it. My guess is that the money came originally out of the pockets of consumers of electric power, and that it was relayed through the treasuries of interests desiring to eliminate the most effective opponent of their far-flung forays on the public water-power domain.

* * * * *

MISFORTUNE continues to pursue all the efforts of the Department of Justice to prosecute the radio trust. An "investigation" which had extended over uncounted years was nearing completion several months ago, when the department lawyers in charge of it suddenly resigned in a body. Under considerable prompting from the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce a new start was made, and the department was on the verge of filing suits, so it is said, when the trust unexpectedly announced an entirely new set-up, involving an exchange of stock and patents among the Radio Corporation and its parent companies, General Electric and Westinghouse, and now the poor department doesn't know where it stands. Of course, it might appear to a mere layman that the same persons and corporations are involved in the new arrangement as in the old. The fine Italian hand of Owen D. Young and the bolder strokes of Dave Sarnoff are quite as discernible as when the notorious "tube clause" was being rammed down the throats of the struggling independents. The performers have simply begun the next act without taking the pains to change their false whiskers. But to the great legal minds intrusted with enforcing the federal statutes against monopoly a wholly new situation has been presented—and one that calls for further delay.

* * * * *

HOWEVER, candor, coupled with a distinct sense of shame, compels me to report that the most cowardly and pusillanimous exhibition which Washington has wit-

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nessed lately was staged, not by an official body, but by an organization containing the leading members of a profession to which I have the sometimes doubtful honor of belonging. The American Society of Newspaper Editors, assembled in annual convention here, has just rejected, for the fourth or fifth time, a proposed amendment to its constitution enabling it to censure, suspend, or expel members for disgraceful conduct or gross violation of ethics. The members of this society are daily engaged in scrutinizing and judging the conduct of persons in every other occupation. They neither hesitate to denounce breaches of ethics by members of other professions nor to demand the infliction of penalties. Yet nine years after adopting a high-sounding code of their own they refuse to adopt the only measure by which that code could be enforced. "Disgraceful" was the adjective used by one member to characterize this refusal, and disgraceful it was, without a doubt. The unsuccessful fight for adoption of the amendment was led by Willis J. Abbot of the *Christian Science Monitor,* and the opposition was championed by the learned Caspar S. Yost of the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat,* long celebrated in his home town as the foremost living sponsor of literary compositions received through the medium of the ouija board. I have read the transcript of the debate which preceded rejection of the amendment, giving particular attention to the speeches in opposition, and I recall no occasion when so many flabby, transparent, shoddy, and specious arguments were uttered in an equal space of time. There were two in chief. The first, and most nonsensical, was that the power to punish unethical conduct on the part of members was equivalent to the power of "censorship" over their newspapers. The second was that such disciplinary action might disrupt the society—although it is practiced by every country club in the United States. It is but fair to say that the proposal was defeated by a minority vote, two-thirds being necessary for adoption. Nevertheless, the humiliating fact remains that among fifty-two of the foremost newspaper editors of the country there were twenty-three who voted against it. Tom Wallace of the Louisville *Times* proverbially likened their attitude toward offending members to that of the shiftless farmer toward wild onions: "The only way to get rid of them is to die and leave them." And these are the gentlemen who cannot restrain their professional indignation over the quality of the ethics displayed by Senate investigating committees!

The Press Today

III. The United Press*

By OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

IN the history of the Associated Press the year 1929 will surely rank with 1914 as one of the darkest of all. For it was during this period that a dreadful blow descended. Incredible as it seems, the New York *Herald Tribune* and the Chicago *Daily News* subscribed to the news service of the United Press. If Mr. Hoover were to hoist the red flag on the White House some morning and Secretary Mellon were to denounce the right to hold private property, the Associated Press would surely not be more startled. The *Herald Tribune* blazoned forth its treachery in full-page advertisements. And the Chicago heresy must have been particularly distressing, for the *Daily News* was the organ of the late Victor F. Lawson, one of the men who took the lead in founding the Associated Press, of which he was for years the most powerful director.

What is this United Press that is fluttering the dovecotes of the Associated Press in such an agonizing way? It is a purely mercantile undertaking designed to make money, and it has been doing just that for the past twenty years. By its aggressiveness and enterprise it has built up a clientele of 1,250 papers—as large as that of the Associated Press—with this difference, that only 900 are in the United States while 350 are outside our boundaries. The United Press was founded originally to supply news only to evening papers. Ten years ago it enlarged its service to include morning papers, though the bulk of its clients are still evening newspapers. Within the past twelve months it has added no less than sixty-nine dailies to its list, some of them extremely important, such as the Philadelphia *Record,* the Houston *Post-Dispatch,* the Louisville *Times,* the Wheeling *News,* the Mobile *Press,* and the Springfield (Mo.) *Press.* With two such dailies as the New York *Herald Tribune* and the Chicago *Daily News* surrendering to the charms of its service, the United Press may well look forward to capturing many other Associated Press strongholds. Indeed, one may even ask whether the competition of the Associated Press and the United Press will not eventually be within the pages of all leading dailies, instead of, as at first, between two groups of dailies each taking one service only.

The United Press lacks every one of the cooperative features which distinguish its great rival, the A. P. It reports news for purposes of sale only. Its members have no more control over it than the subscribers to a circulating library have over its management. In either case, the subscribers can give up the service if it is not up to the standard desired; they have no other direct way of modifying its policies. Whether this is or is not an effective veto every journalist will judge for himself. The members of the United Press are never even called into its councils. Whereas the Associated Press is what its directors and members wish it to be the United Press is today what Robert Paine Scripps, Karl Bickel, Roy Howard, and their immediate associates say it shall be. Mr. Scripps is the controlling owner. In practice the management rests with Mr. Bickel, James H. Furay, Hugh Baillie, Robert J. Bender, James I. Miller, and the other United Press executives, all of them part owners. To them belongs the credit for its good features and to them the blame for its weaknesses. They say for what and how the $6,000,000 disbursed each year for the gathering and distribution of news shall be expended.

* This is the third in a series of articles on the American press. The fourth, on the chain daily, will appear in our issue of May 21.—Editor The Nation.

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They do not pretend that theirs is a public-spirited enterprise; on the contrary, they constantly declare that it is just another commercial, profit-seeking institution. They rarely speak of themselves as journalists, but usually as business men. With equal frankness they declare that the United Press has no policies of any kind and no desires save "to present to its clients throughout the world a world-wide service of news, objective and impartial, without prejudice of any kind, national, sectional, economic, social, or religious."

Theoretically, then, the organization of the Associated Press is, as I have already pointed out, far superior to that of the privately owned United Press. Yet the latter happens to be the more liberal agency for gathering news, happens to have much more sympathy for the under-dog, happens to be far less sensitive to the great capitalistic press influences which gather around the directors' table of the Associated Press. This is purely accidental, for it was only by chance that the United Press was founded by the late E. W. Scripps, who was opposed to a monopoly in news and faced American problems from the good, old-fashioned liberal point of view. Nor is there any guaranty in the form of its organization that twenty-five or fifty years from now, when the present managers and owners have passed from the scene, the United Press will not be an entirely different affair run with a totally different spirit.

For the steady progress of the United Press there are several explanations. In the first place, no one can question the unusual ability of Roy Howard and Karl Bickel. They have been fortunate in having the complete confidence and the unlimited financial backing of the Scripps family with their liberal point of view, which is also the actuating spirit of the twenty-five Scripps-Howard newspapers. They were untrammeled by conventions. The very fact that they were the dictators of the organization made it possible for them to go ahead rapidly without first having to consult the heads of a number of their member dailies. They could snap their fingers at any dissenter. In order to establish their service they had to avail themselves of every new device and to think up new ways of getting their news cheaply and quickly. Thus, they were first to utilize the facilities of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company for telegraphic news transmission. Mr. Bickel boasts that it was the United Press which first developed the use of the telephone for the transmission of a "pony" (i.e., small) news report; this made it possible to provide a larger service than by telegraph and for less money.

It was the United Press which first extensively used the printer-telegraph machine, operating extensive circuits without any operator attendant on a one-way basis—something that had been said to be impossible. It was quick to welcome the radio, in which it saw not a competitor, but a valuable ally, and it lays the unction to its soul that its use of a national hook-up on the occasion of the general election in 1924 brought about the final acceptance by its rivals of the radio as a necessary adjunct of any news service. Mr. Bickel himself attributes the remarkable expansion of its world service to the fact that it has not belonged to the so-called "official-agency" group, and that it has always been free from nationalistic bias. This may have been accidental; that is, if the Associated Press had not already been linked up with Reuter, Havas, and the other official or semi-official foreign agencies, the United Press might have been happy to make use of their services. But undoubtedly it was a blessing both for the United Press and for the general public that it had to be independent. There are only a couple of exceptions to this rule. It has a connection with the Nippon Dempo Tsushin Sha, the largest agency in Japan, and a slight one with the Australian Press Association. It covers Japan, however, with its own separate correspondents as well. There is a widely held belief that in South and Central America the United Press has done much to improve our relations with our southern neighbors and has gone out of its way to do so.

At home the United Press collects its news not from member newspapers, as does the Associated Press, but by means of correspondents appointed in various localities. Its officers, of course, believe that this is a better system; that it does not place them at the mercy of the news standards and facilities of their members. On the other hand, it places upon the United Press a very heavy responsibility in picking its representatives. Most of them are paid only for what they send in. In the South, for example, their representatives are just as much subject to local prejudices as are the representatives of the Associated Press. The United Press, however, can change its correspondents as rapidly as it pleases, and its officers are bound to realize that the quality and reliability of their service depend upon the care taken in the selection of their local representatives. In Haiti, by the way, the United Press also chose an American officer as its correspondent but mitigated the offense by using a Haitian too.

It would be ridiculous, of course, to assert that the United Press service has been all that it ought to be. It has suffered from growing pains, from the errors made in the building up of a new organization, and there have been big gaps in the territory it has tried to cover. One who was for years a trusted United Press representative abroad is of the opinion that its sense of values has not always been of the best, for the reason that it is an attacking organization, whereas the Associated Press has been intrenched in its position. He adds this in explanation:

> The A. P. can take aim before firing, but the U. P. must be quick on the trigger and must sometimes fire from the hip. I think this explains why the U. P. occasionally fires a whole broadside at a fleeting target and lays down a barrage on subjects not worth a pot shot. It is apt to be more interested in providing entertainment than instruction, in surprising rather than in being profound. I suspect that sometimes it chooses not to verify a good story too exactly, lest it [the story] should blow up and disappear.

It is interesting to note his belief that since it is the more commercially minded the U. P. feels more responsibility toward its client newspapers than toward the ultimate public. He adds that if he were a publisher he would prefer the U. P. service, but if he were a careful and thoughtful reader of newspapers he would prefer the Associated Press because its news, though sometimes slower, would probably be more thoughtfully prepared. These, he declares, are not unfriendly observations: "I got a great kick out of working for the U. P. I am enthusiastic about it, its people, and its purposes, and I think it is a most necessary and precious stimulant to the A. P." It seems as if the case could hardly be stated better.

I find, however, other criticisms from worth-while

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sources. One is that the United Press does not pay its correspondents enough.* This charge is emphatically denied by the United Press. The belief is probably due to the policy of the whole Scripps group of organizations of paying low salaries to those at the bottom and rewarding the executives and key men with stock as well as large salaries, which makes them interested in keeping expenses down and profits up. Otherwise they might be more interested in building for the future, for the day when they will be established beyond injury by competition and can set themselves primarily to making their news service as authoritative as that of their chief rival. It is an interesting fact that while the A. P. has been letting down its standards the U. P. is being compelled by the logic of events to move in the opposite direction. Evidence of the way the United Press has been drifting in the direction of the Associated Press is the fact that its executives have been for two years working on the question of broadening its contractual relations with its clientele to give "due recognition of the values that a client confers on the United Press locally as a result of long-time relationship." This means that although founded for the express purpose of preventing a monopoly in news, and as a protest against the Associated Press policy of permitting a member newspaper to prevent others in its immediate territory, under given conditions, from obtaining the Associated Press service, the United Press is now trying to find some way of protecting a client without at the same time violating its policy of "non-exclusivity"—to use its own awkward word.

In Washington the United Press at times seems weak. Sometimes inexperienced men are found in foreign positions of great importance—good men who have to learn their jobs at the cost of the service. Sometimes, as it would be easy to prove, these men "force" their stories because of their desire to get in the human-interest note. It certainly seems hardly worth while to thrill the world with the following dispatch here printed entire:

Predicts War in Far East

BERLIN, April 12 (UP).—A war in the Far East, a new European political figure whose name contains the letter Z, and an exciting turmoil of European politics have been predicted by Madame Sylvia.

In its Washington service, also, there is too much hitting of the high spots, just as there is too much banality throughout its news reporting, though that is more excusable in a new service than in the Associated Press, which under Melville E. Stone denounced that sort of thing and at all times has boasted of its high standards, its superior virtues, and its shining rectitude.

Like the Associated Press the United Press has stooped to conquer. It was the pioneer in adding to its service such features as sports, women's-page matter, cartoons, comic strips, and "human-interest" stories. It gave, in fact, the poor example which the Associated Press followed in this field. It, too, has found it necessary to cater to that recent development in accordance with which the daily newspaper is getting away more and more from the original conception that it was solely a purveyor of news and opinion and is entering the amusement field in competition with the movie and the radio. Cross-word puzzles, children's corners, bedtime stories, advice to the lovelorn, news pictures, and sport pictures—these are all part of the effort to meet the new and threatening competition from outside the business and the never-halting demand for larger and larger circulation.

It was the ill fate of the United Press to perpetrate the greatest hoax in modern press reporting—the fake armistice announcement of November 7, 1918. The world literally went mad with joy when the premature news was flashed that hostilities had ended. In a sense the false report served a useful purpose in that it made officials everywhere realize how deeply the people desired a cessation of bloodshed. Naturally the Associated Press made full use of this bad break of its rival. A careful examination of the evidence in the case plainly proves that the United Press, in the person of Roy Howard himself, was the victim of an error of the naval attache of our Embassy in Paris who telegraphed to Admiral Henry B. Wilson at Brest as follows: "Armistice signed this morning at eleven. All hostilities ceased at 2 p. m. today." When Roy Howard called upon the Admiral on November 7 the latter casually showed him the telegram. Not unnaturally Howard made immediate use of it. It seemed as if the biggest news scoop in history had fallen into his hands by accident, for he was then at Brest not to obtain news but to take ship to the United States. Had the Paris dispatch been a truthful one, Howard's fame as a journalist would be supreme. As it was, there came down upon his head and upon the United Press an avalanche of abuse and denunciation enough almost to wreck them both. It took a long while for the United Press to work out from under the shadow of this victimization.

Since then Mr. Howard has gone on to the active headship of the Scripps-Howard newspaper syndicate, with Karl Bickel taking his place as head of the United Press. Both are still comparatively young men, respectively forty-seven and forty-eight years old. They have already made their mark upon the journalism of this country and of the world and they may continue to do so for years to come. As long as they are at the head of their respective organizations the United Press service will be the one to which reformers and all interested in liberal causes and better human relations will turn first in the belief that they will be received with sympathy and understanding. There are those who think that this liberal attitude is in part inspired by recognition of the fact that it is good business for the United Press to be liberal in contradistinction to the Associated Press. I prefer to believe that the main motive lies in their own convictions and their attitude toward the problems of mankind. Whatever their motives, the fact that the United Press under their leadership is what it is is of enormous importance to all who believe that the America of the future should be something different from the self-satisfied and socially and politically reactionary country in which we live today.

[Mr. Louis Wiley of the New York *Times* has telephoned to me since the appearance of my second article on the Associated Press that Mr. Adolph S. Ochs has no recollection of the incident, related by me in that article, according to which Mr. Ochs had contemplated placing his editorial page in charge of a national committee, negotiations breaking

*Edna Ferber after being, as she felt, poorly paid by the U. P. received a bunch of flowers from one of its executives. At once she wrote that he was living up to what she felt was the U. P. motto: *Pay* it with flowers.

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down because of his unwillingness to give assurances that the committee might feel free to criticize even the President of the United States. I can only say that the information came to me from a source as distinguished and trustworthy as the words of Mr. Wiley and Mr. Ochs. Mr. Wiley also assures me that Mr. Ochs does not approve of the lowering of the standards of the Associated Press in printing banal and vulgar human-interest stories and comic strips, and has always voted against it. This is valuable testimony that in his estimation the service has gone down, and I am the more happy to have it because it is entirely consistent with Mr. Ochs's admirable policy in keeping the *Times* free from that sort of thing, especially from comic strips and cheap Sunday supplements. As I have said before in writing, there is nothing in Mr. Ochs's remarkable journalistic achievements more praiseworthy than this.—O. G. V.]

France Wins at London

By ROBERT DELL

Paris, April 15

BRIAND returned from London last night, covered with flowers by the French semi-official press. The French have got what they wanted and prevented what they wished to prevent. As Paul-Boncour said in the Chamber some months ago, they accepted the invitation to the naval conference most unwillingly, because in the circumstances they could not do otherwise, and the French delegates went to London with the firm intention of preventing, if possible, any final agreement for the reduction or limitation of naval armaments. The French official view, openly stated again and again by the *Temps,* was that the conference should merely lay down principles for the guidance of the preparatory disarmament commission at Geneva. As the *Temps* said again only three days ago, the French viewed with uneasiness the possibility that the question of naval disarmament might be settled separately from those of land and air disarmament. One reason was that there is more room for bargaining when armies and navies are being discussed together. The other, frankly avowed by Paul-Boncour, that strange militarist excrescence on the French Socialist Party, was that in London they would be alone, whereas at Geneva they have behind them what Paul-Boncour called their "retinue" of allies.

The French have succeeded in their chief aim, thanks to the Italian demand for parity with France, which enabled the French delegation to refuse the smallest reduction in the French naval program. The French were just as much justified in refusing to consent to the Italian demand, which would mean Italian superiority in the Mediterranean, as were the Americans in refusing to grant Japan parity with the United States, and much more justified than was the British Labor Government in insisting on a two-power standard for the British fleet in European waters. That insistence, which shows how completely MacDonald and Alexander are under the thumb of the Admiralty, implies the crazy hypothesis that there is a danger of a Franco-Italian alliance against England.

Thus Tardieu and Briand come out of the conference with a perfectly free hand. France has not yielded a single ton of her naval program and need not slacken her naval building for a single week. Official France has had her way about submarines, and indeed on every point, and as a naval disarmament conference the conference is an utter failure, as official France wished it to be. The diplomatic victory of France, however, is due more to luck than to skill, for it is not the fault of France alone, nor even of France and Italy together, that the conference is a failure. It has been run on wrong lines from the very beginning. It has never been a naval disarmament conference, but a competition between the Powers represented at it to maintain respectively their present naval strength relatively to the other Powers, at the smallest possible cost. It is plain now that both the American and the British governments were actuated solely by financial considerations. The French delegation went to London in fear and trembling, expecting to be met by a sweeping program of naval reduction. When they found that Hoover and MacDonald, having summoned a conference, had no concrete proposals of any kind to put before it, their surprise was equaled only by their joy. Jacques Kayser, the young secretary of the French Radical Party, is quite right: the real cause of the failure of the conference has been a lack of sincerity on the part of all the governments represented.

Logically, it would seem, the failure of the conference should have greatly strengthened the position of the Tardieu Cabinet, for the policy of the French delegation at London was even more Tardieu's policy than that of Briand, who has made himself the prisoner of the nationalists. His conduct in London, which has won him the admiration even of "Pertinax," has justified what Léon Blum wrote in the *Populaire* when Briand joined the Tardieu Cabinet: "He cannot continue his policy without us. We can continue it without him." MacDonald's blunder in embarking on the abortive negotiations about "security" is another feather in the cap of Tardieu and Briand and the opponents of disarmament generally. As Léon Blum said the other day, the negotiations will be exploited in favor of the thesis that the present guaranties of security are insufficient to justify any reduction of armaments, and it will be said that the British government has implicitly admitted this. Here again Briand was taken by surprise. There can be no doubt that he went back to London with his demand for further guaranties of "security"—in other words, the revival of the Geneva Protocol—expecting that it would be at once refused and that the refusal would give him an excuse for declining any further discussion about the reduction of the French naval program. MacDonald's consent to negotiate about a formula defining the obligations of Great Britain under Article XVI of the League Covenant perhaps disconcerted Briand for a moment, for neither he nor Tardieu intended to make any concessions in return for such a formula, but Italy came to the rescue by insisting on parity. Then the French delegation declared that France must have

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240,000 tons more than Italy, and MacDonald withdrew his formula.

Nevertheless, the Tardieu Cabinet is in as unstable a position as ever for reasons of internal politics. Now that the Young Plan is ratified by France and the naval conference is over, the days of the Cabinet are numbered. Tardieu has no majority in the Chamber without the support of the Left Center and that support is dependent on his pursuing a policy more or less to the Left on questions of internal politics, by which he inevitably indisposes the bulk of his supporters, who belong to the Right and the Right Center. He has avoided a fall hitherto by abstaining from putting the question of confidence and accepting hostile votes even on matters of importance. Any day an accident may happen. A ministerial crisis would not, however, change the situation for the better. The only alternative to the present government is a so-called Government of Concentration, that is, a coalition of the Radicals with all the groups of the Right and Left Center, excluding the Right on the one hand and the Socialists on the other. Such a government would have a small majority on paper, but its existence would be as precarious as that of any other government with the present impossible Chamber. Moreover, it would compromise the Radicals, whose real interest it is to remain in opposition with the Socialists until the next general election, although they do not all recognize it. The only solution is a dissolution of the Chamber, for which the constitution provides with the consent of the Senate, but although many of the Radicals and Socialists are now in favor of it they do not yet carry their parties with them. Circumstances may, however, compel a resort to a dissolution before 1932, when the general election will be held in the ordinary course. All the reports from the provinces suggest that a general election now would result in a victory for the parties of the Left and the results of the recent by-elections point to the same conclusion, but there is an ancient prejudice against a dissolution, and the Radical and Socialist Parties as a whole cannot make up their minds to defy tradition and take the plunge.

There can be no change for the better in French policy so long as the present Chamber lasts. The London conference has made still worse the prospects of any real progress toward disarmament, bad as they were already. No conference at Geneva can have any better result as things are at present, and a window-dressing agreement like that of London will still further damage the reputation of the League of Nations, already badly compromised. It is a deplorable fact that faith in the League as a means of getting rid of war is steadily declining, especially among the young, but the high priests and apostles of the League do not seem to recognize it, still less to recognize their own responsibility for it. Perhaps it is hardly too much to say that nothing has done more harm to the League of Nations than the League of Nations unions with their dogma of Geneva's infallibility, their denunciation of all criticism of the League as due to ignorance or prejudice, and their fondness for the policy of evading problems by window-dressing solutions, which has been and is the curse of Geneva. Some of the energetic propagandists in the League secretariat have also much to answer for. Far better to admit frankly that one cannot solve a problem in existing conditions than to try to deceive the world with a fake solution. It is useless to go on with disarmament discussions in present conditions, and the meeting of the preparatory disarmament commission at Geneva ought to be adjourned sine die. Nothing can be done until there is a fundamental change in French policy, and such a change can be possible only after a French general election that has resulted in the formation of a government of the Left in which the Socialists predominate. That is to say, barring a dissolution, there is no chance of it before 1932. The chance of it then depends to a very great extent on the policy of the British government. Official France, as it is at present, is hopeless, but the French people are not at all hopeless. They need to be enlightened and to be given a lead. The business of English Laborites and Liberals is to give a lead to the elements in France that sincerely desire peace and disarmament, instead of trying to satisfy the demands of the French nationalists for more "security," which means nothing else than security for the peace treaties. Léon Blum has told them that no guaranties of security for France will satisfy official France and the French general staff, because, of course, it is not guaranties for France that they are after. They know that France is secure enough already. What they want is to stereotype all the existing territorial arrangements in Europe and to induce England—and Germany—to guarantee unjust and impossible frontiers. But the British Labor Government and most of the leading men in the British Labor Party pay no attention to Léon Blum, although he may quite possibly be prime minister of France in a couple of years. It is really deplorable to see men whom we all respect and admire, such as Norman Angell and Brailsford, actually, with the best intentions, playing into the hands of the nationalists and opponents of disarmament in France by pandering to their demand for "security."

What Europe needs is a strong and bold leader—somebody with the courage to throw a very big stone into the stagnant pool of Geneva and make a very big splash. I am afraid that the present British Labor Government have not that courage, although they could be sure of the support of the Liberals if they gave a bold lead. It is time to say publicly in the Assembly of the League of Nations that England can join in no further guaranties of the status quo unless and until all alliances have been abolished and effective arrangements have been made for the peaceful revision of the peace treaties where they are unjust or absurd or both. The Polish frontiers, for example, ought not to be secure and the Poles ought to know that they are insecure. If these and other impossible frontiers are not altered by peaceful means, they will sooner or later be altered by force, protocol or no protocol. If the French system of alliances continues, a rival system will be set up against it sooner or later and the continent of Europe will again be divided into two hostile camps. Briand himself said in the Senate last month that "the conception of the old alliances" inevitably leads to hostile groups of Powers. And France is the foremost advocate and supporter of that conception! As regards disarmament there is only one honest and safe course—that the victorious Powers should accept the conditions that they imposed on Germany and the other conquered Powers. The day when a British prime minister declares to the world that England recognizes that moral obligation and proposes disarmament on that basis, there will be a response in France that will astonish him.

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War on the Chain Store

By HARRY W. SCHACTER

A NEW battle on evolution is raging in the South. This time, however, the issue is not religious but economic; it has to do with the theory of the economics of distribution. The battle, which is being waged on many fronts, is between the small retailer, taking the fundamentalist position, against the chain store, an exponent of modernism in distribution. Within the past few months the immediate fight has been crystallized by one crusader, W. K. Henderson of Shreveport, Louisiana, who has sallied forth through his radio station KWKH to give battle to the chain-store devil and to the "evil hosts in Wall Street." The thing, however, has been a long time in coming and can be traced back to the vast economic revolution that began in this country ten or fifteen years ago. Let me trace it briefly.

Shortly before the war the term "mass production" began to be heard, mostly in connection with the name of Henry Ford. Then came the war, with its vast need for goods coupled with a shortage of man power to produce those goods. By the time the war was over "mass production" had become a definite part of our national economy. After the war manufacturers continued to produce tremendous quantities of merchandise only to find the outlet for this production impeded by the small, incompetent, independent retailer. A new means had to be found for increasing distribution. The answer was "mass distribution" through the chain stores.

In a comparatively short time—within the past five or six years to be exact—the chain store has completely altered the economic life of the American community. Louisville, Kentucky, affords a typical example of what has been happening. I have recently made a survey of the retail establishments on the main shopping thoroughfare of Louisville. I have found that from 85 to 90 per cent of the retail business done on this thoroughfare is done by chain stores. Five years ago the condition was exactly the opposite, with 85 to 90 per cent of the business carried on by locally owned establishments. The picture of Louisville can be duplicated in every fair-sized city or town in the United States. In many sections of the country this revolution has been accepted and its benefits recognized without much thought as to consequences. In the South local sentiment persists, and resentment against chain stores has risen with much greater force.

This feeling had been smoldering for a long time and needed only some forceful leadership to make it blaze forth. This leadership was provided by W. K. Henderson. Mr. Henderson, who owned an iron foundry in Shreveport, Louisiana, thought it might be a good idea to build himself a radio station as an adjunct to his business. He disported himself by broadcasting nightly on various subjects, and either because he was very uncouth or because he was a good showman or both, he decided that a little profanity and obscenity added to his remarks would give him plenty of publicity. Mr. Henderson happened one day to hear a local retailer making a speech before the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce in which the speaker told how the chains were cutting in on the local dealers. Henderson liked the speech and invited the man to repeat it that night over KWKH. After it was finished Mr. Henderson himself spoke as follows:

> I am going to tell you what that address means. It means that these dirty, sneaking chain stores are coming into your home town and taking your money and sending it out to a bunch of crooked, no-account loafers in Wall Street! That's what it means.

That night and the next day Mr. Henderson received hundreds of telegrams and in a few days several thousand letters from all parts of the country. The comments struck every note from commendation to abuse. For several hours each night Henderson read these comments to his radio audience and briefly sermonized upon each in a very entertaining way, mixing wisdom with profanity and abuse, and greeting his audience with the now well-known cry: "Hello, World, don't go away, doggone your buttons!"

The more he spoke, the greater the interest he aroused. So widely did his name and influence spread that when Senator Dill of Washington suggested that his broadcasting license be revoked thousands on thousands of letters and telegrams of protest poured in on the Radio Commission, with the result that Mr. Henderson was permitted to continue after he had promised to curb his obscenity. Throughout the South the name of Henderson was on everyone's lips, and the question of the chain-store menace was, and is today, the question most talked of below the Ohio.

Mr. Henderson now began to send out organizers to small towns through the South. Independent merchants were urged to band themselves together under the title of Merchants' Minute Men. The sole requisite for membership was the payment of $12 a year to Mr. Henderson. It is estimated that there are today from ten to twenty thousand members of this organization, and in the smaller towns women who trade at chain stores are becoming unpopular. While Mr. Henderson's attacks have been centered on chain stores in general they have been particularly directed against chain grocery stores, because in that field the chains have made their greatest progress. It is estimated that the total retail sales in this country amounted to approximately eighty billion dollars in 1929. About fifteen billion dollars' worth of this business was transacted by chains; and half of the chain-store total was done by the grocery chains.

Mr. Henderson's attacks are having some very concrete results. In Birmingham, Alabama, it is estimated that a large chain grocery concern has lost about one-third of its business directly because of his crusade. Everywhere through the South the sales volume of the chains, particularly the groceries, has fallen off to a greater or less degree. The influence of Mr. Henderson has even made itself felt on a number of legislatures in the South. In Kentucky, for instance, the House of Representatives not long ago passed a sales-tax bill directly aimed at the chain stores. The bill provides for a sales tax on every retail establishment. It would be unconstitutional otherwise. The difference, however, is this: on up to $400,000 of annual sales volume the merchant pays only one-twentieth of 1 per cent; on sales

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above this figure the tax is graduated so steeply that by the time the sales volume reaches a million dollars the rate of tax is twenty times as high. It is specifically stated in the bill that any holding company for a number of stores pays on the combined sales volume of all stores in the State of Kentucky. Thus, the Atlantic and Pacific grocery chain, which has a sales volume in Kentucky of approximately sixteen million dollars, and the Kroger stores, which have a sales volume of approximately fourteen million dollars, must pay a tax proportionately about twenty times as large as the small grocer. Just before the vote was called in the House one legislator gave Mr. Henderson's war cry, "Hello, World, don't go away," and amid uproarious laughter the bill passed by a vote of 85 to 4.

On February 27 I was present at a hearing on this bill before the Senate Committee on Revenue and Taxation at Frankfort. There were present more than a thousand people, who jammed the Senate Chamber to its very doors. A Louisville attorney representing the Retail Merchants' Association of Kentucky presented the argument opposing the bill, while the secretary of the Louisville Retail Grocery Association defended it. It was evident from the beginning that a number of the Senators on the committee had made up their minds in advance. The most interesting element in the hearing was the temper of that portion of the crowd, about six hundred strong, who represented the independent retailer. The appeal of the representative of the small merchant was highly emotional; and it aroused such fervor among his adherents that at times the gathering took on the appearance of a religious revival. When the speaker was in the midst of calling the chains all the names in the category a small merchant standing next to me kept yelling at the top of his lungs: "Get at 'em, boy, hit 'em hard, Glory Hallelujah!" Needless to say, the bill was reported favorably by the Senate committee and passed by the Senate by a vote of 27 to 11.

One of the more amusing skirmishes in the war on the chain store began only recently and is still going strong. Mr. Henderson has been particularly uncomplimentary in his attacks upon Clarence Saunders, the founder of the Piggly Wiggly grocery stores. Saunders, it will be recalled, went down to inglorious defeat at the hands of Wall Street several years ago and is now operating a chain of grocery stores under his own name in a number of cities in the South. Mr. Saunders, who is apparently as outspoken as Mr. Henderson and as picturesque, has taken it upon himself to answer Mr. Henderson's attacks in half-page and full-page advertisements in various newspapers. In one advertisement headed "Eat Your Cotton—Don't Sell It to a Foreigner," Mr. Saunders advanced the argument that if nothing should be purchased from any except strictly "home" merchants then nothing should be sold to any person outside the community. Another paragraph began as follows: "Ole Man Henderson's racket of arousing prejudice is as old as the first man who undertook to capitalize the ignorance of his fellow-men for his own personal end"; and ended thus: "So that there would be no mistake as to who wrote this article, I, Clarence Saunders, wrote every word of it . . ." Mr. Henderson undertook to answer over the radio. Apparently a number of people were gathered at his side as he spoke over the microphone. His answer went something like this: "Clarence, you bankrupt, you try to tell me what to do? Ha, ha, ha!" In the laughter Mr. Henderson was joined by his chorus. Henderson's entire answer to Mr. Saunders consisted of calling him names.

Mr. Saunders has just fired the second shot in the form of a full-page advertisement. It is headed "A Shiny-Eyed Rat," and Mr. Saunders refers to his opponent throughout as Rat Henderson of radio station KWKH. He points out that Mr. Henderson is urging all the home folks to purchase from the home-town merchant and at the same time is selling them coffee over the radio at one dollar a pound, which yields Mr. Henderson the handsome profit of sixty cents a pound. Incidentally, it is estimated that Mr. Henderson receives orders for about 1,500 pounds of coffee a day. Mr. Saunders goes on to point out that while Mr. Henderson is claiming to be the champion of the poor and downtrodden, he does not permit union men to work in his iron foundry. He further calls to mind the time when Mr. Henderson personally undertook to operate a street car in Shreveport while the street-car employees were on strike. Some of the language is extremely picturesque, as for example:

> You said that if I were near you'd spit in my face. Now, listen to me, Rat Henderson, whenever you think you are skunk enough to try this let your spit spew on my face and there'll be a skunk hide that will know that something has happened to it.

Mr. Saunders goes on to call Mr. Henderson a hypocrite and a liar. There is a great deal to be said for Mr. Henderson's sympathy for the small merchant, who is faced with slow extinction. There is also considerable to be said against Mr. Henderson. In addition to his coffee sales at one dollar a pound, he is utilizing this crusade to sell insurance, trips to Mexico, and grapefruit, not to mention memberships in the Merchants' Minute Men.

That the independent retailers are sorely beset by the chain is without question true. The United States government through its Department of Commerce has been making a survey of the grocery situation in the city of Louisville, known as the Louisville Grocery Survey. It has been found that no fewer than thirty small grocery stores are going out of business in Louisville every month. In other words, every day one grocer is falling by the wayside in Louisville because he is unable to cope with this economic tide! The chain store is strong because it has made a definite contribution toward lowering the costs of distribution. So long as it does its job well and renders this economic service to the people no amount of abuse and no reasonable amount of taxation can curb it. Hope for the independent does not lie in calling names and trying to prevent housewives from trading in the chain stores. It does not lie in levying upon the independent a tax of $1 while the chain pays a tax of $20. The answer lies rather in the direction of organization. The small inefficient independent must perform his job of distribution both with the efficiency and with the low costs of the chain. If the independent can do this by aligning himself with other independents, he can beat the chains. If not, there will be a great to-do for a while with much calling of names and slinging of mud, but in the long run the housewife, who is finally to decide this battle by her patronage, will go where the prices are cheaper and the service better.

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In the Driftway

ONE could hardly live in New Orleans three days, even if one fasted all that time, without knowing that the city rejoices in good cooking. Rejoices is the right word, because New Orleanians take justifiable pleasure in their cooking—and say so out loud. The law of supply and demand rules in food as in other matters. In order to have good cooking there must be a sizable public which knows good cooking from bad and insists upon having it. New Orleans has such a public. The visitor is made aware at once that he is among people who take cooking seriously. He is asked if he likes this or has ever tried that; he is admonished to go to a certain restaurant on a certain day for a certain dish. "Oh, you *must* stay to lunch," his host at the club says; "this is our day for chicken Creole." Even for a modest Sunday night supper his hostess will consult him in advance as to what he likes, and he is not expected to eat what is set before him in silence.

* * * * *

AS an illustration of the serious attitude toward food which one encounters, the Drifter recalls inviting a lady in New Orleans to lunch and asking her to suggest a restaurant. At the appointed hour she appeared and proceeded to recite the entire menu of the table d'hote lunch at two places. She had called up both by telephone that morning so that the Drifter, with full information before him, might make a choice. Of course, that *might* happen outside New Orleans, but the Drifter doubts it.

* * * * *

ONE cannot even read the newspapers without realizing the preoccupation of New Orleans with good cookery. Within a period of only two weeks, recently, the Drifter noted prominent accounts of the death and burial of two chefs. In New York City, with ten times as large a population, it is doubtful if there are half a dozen chefs whose death would occasion more than a paragraph, if that. Of the two New Orleans chefs whose deaths were chronicled, one was a Negro. As a rule the names of Negroes do not get into Southern newspapers except when the bearers of them get into the calaboose charged with crime. But the Negro who can cook—and hundreds of them still can—is honored as well as the white man. Neville Jarreau had been at one time the chef of the Boston Club, the oldest organization of its kind in New Orleans, and back in the eighties he had prepared a dinner for President Grant when the latter made a visit to the city. Jarreau's skin was black, but his cooking made the mouths of white men water, and the New Orleans press did not neglect his memory when he passed. The other chef to whose death the newspapers gave prominence was eighty-six years old and had retired from the kitchen twenty-five years previous to his end. Yet Pierre Marais was recalled as having been the chef at the famous Spanish Fort Hotel in the days of its glory, and the *Times-Picayune* said that in 1882 when a reporter was sent to write up the debut of a cornet player he almost forgot to mention the musician in the unrestrained eulogy he wrote of Pierre's cooking.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

"Our Country,—"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Here is the examination of a candidate for naturalization by a judge in Louisiana. For the name and address of the authenticating witness see the *Christian Century* for April 9. The speakers are the judge and the candidate.

JUDGE. What did you do during the World War?

CANDIDATE. I served for three years in the British army and spent about fifteen months overseas in Salonika. (Exhibits correct discharge papers certifying record.)

J. Supposing the United States engaged in a war that you considered was wrong, what would be your attitude?

C. I would consider it my duty to protect and defend democracy.

J. But supposing, to take a concrete case, California wanted more territory and decided to seize some in Mexico, and every man was drafted for some form of service, would you object or be loyal?

C. I do not believe the United States would engage in such a war.

J. I do not want any conditions. Under such circumstances, a war of aggression, would you object?

C. In all probability I would. I would first have to consider my duty to God and to humanity.

J. In other words, you cannot subscribe under any and every condition to the doctrine, My country right or wrong, my country?

C. No.

J. Then you cannot be admitted. What we want are citizens who are prepared to say, My country right or wrong, but my country.

This seems to beat anything yet published.

Ballard Vale, Mass., April 11 STEVEN T. BYINGTON

The Ancients Knew

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: It is generally supposed that distilled liquors were not known to the ancients. Let me cite the following passage from the Old Testament (Deut. 14: 26):

> And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth. . . .

In this passage the Hebrew word for wine (*yayin*) is contrasted with the word for strong drink (*shechar*). I am convinced that the "strong drink" referred to in this passage was a distilled liquor. If it had been merely a strong kind of wine it would hardly have been sharply contrasted with wine.

It is also supposed that anaesthesia is a modern discovery; but I once came across this passage in the "De Trinitate" of Hilary of Poitiers, a writer of the fourth century, A.D.:

> Also when through some grave necessity part of the body must be cut away, the soul can be lulled to sleep by drugs, which overcome the pain and produce in the mind a deathlike forgetfulness of its power of sense. Then limbs can be cut off without pain: the flesh is dead to all feeling, and does not heed the deep thrust of the knife, because the soul within it is asleep.—"De Trinitate," Book X, par. 14.

This passage shows unmistakably that the ancients were acquainted with anaesthesia.

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, April 1 CHARLES HOOPER

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Judge Parker and the Negro

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: The editorial in *The Nation* of April 29 opposing the confirmation of Judge Parker and appealing to the race prejudice of colored people is indefensible. You say that Judge Parker should not sit on the Supreme Court bench because cases affecting the rights of colored people will come before that court; and you specifically cite a case involving the Richmond, Virginia, segregation ordinance. You must have known that Judge Parker, presiding in the Circuit Court of Appeals at Richmond, rendered the decision holding that ordinance void because it was violative of the Fourteenth Amendment. As counsel for the colored complainant in that case, I protest against your unfair attack upon an upright, courageous judge.

Richmond, April 27 Alfred E. Cohen

Russian "C. O.'s"

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: In Soviet Russia, as in other countries with compulsory military service, conscientious objectors receive scant consideration. The Russian government, unlike many others, recognizes them and provides alternative civil service for the members of religious sects historically opposed to war. They serve in what is known as the "Civil Battalion," doing public work. But those who refuse this civil service and those who are outside the historical anti-war sects go to prison.

We have recently heard from Tolstoyan friends in Moscow of the hardships which these men are enduring in prison. They are in need of relief, which the Russian government permits through one agency in Moscow headed by Catharine Petchkoff, first wife of Maxim Gorki. In all Russian prisons—and these men serve their sentences in the regular prisons with criminals—prisoners are allowed to have their own clothes, to purchase food from the cooperative prison store to supplement the coarse diet, and to have books sent in from outside.

In making this appeal we are not contributing to any propaganda for or against the Soviet regime. Gifts and contributions may be so designated, but made payable and sent to the Fellowship of Reconciliation, 383 Bible House, Astor Place, New York.

New York, February 27 Roger Baldwin

Contributors to This Issue

Paul Y. Anderson is the national correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

Robert Dell is *The Nation's* correspondent in France.

Harry W. Schacter, who is general manager of a department store in Louisville, has made a special study of retailing methods.

Leslie Nelson Jennings contributes verse to various periodicals.

Robert Livingston Schuyler is professor of history at Columbia University.

H. L. Mencken is editor of the *American Mercury* and a contributing editor of *The Nation*.

Pierre Loving, long resident in France, is now living in New York.

Broadus Mitchell is associate professor of political economy at Johns Hopkins University.

My Life

An Attempt at an Autobiography

by

Leon Trotsky

Emil Ludwig says of this astounding book—"A great writer has here set forth his fantastic life in such a way as to make me wonder why people still read novels, or even write them. The book begins like Hamsun, and closes like a third act...." 600 pages. $5.00

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Books, Music, Drama

Migrant

By LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS

I

Here is a name that anyone might sign,
A City which has covered up the track
Of anonymity more sure than mine
And given of reminiscence nothing back.
No letters are expected and no calls.
The elevator is a gilded trip
To ordered Heavens of softly padded halls,
And the glib welcome of a quarter tip.

Twenty-one stories, and the muffled click
Of a door closing. What a precious boon
Is privacy where concrete walls are thick.
The Silver Grill serves breakfast until noon.
"To sleep, perchance to dream . . ." of space not bound
By any cable anchored underground.

II

Let us prepare tomorrow. Men are flies
Whose wings have been plucked out with patient skill.
Tower upon tower these refutations rise
To prove the dream inviolable still.
One more light scaffolding, a scantling based
On one more promise cunningly defined;
A single step—there is no need for haste—
Night has a thousand eyes, but they are blind.

Moons look astonished at the glittering plume
Of a small comet plunging to some dark
Wedding of sun-dust with primordial doom;
Yet the sky closes over the dying spark.
This window is an eye whose yellow square
Faces the City blankly . . . Let it stare!

A Great Trilogy

The Way Home. By Henry Handel Richardson. W. W. Norton and Company. $2.50.

WITH the appearance of this second novel, the full trilogy of Mary and Richard Mahony is now available to American readers. If we can consider the three novels separately, "The Way Home" is perhaps the least important, for it gives us neither the magnificent picture of pioneer Australia in the first volume nor the absorbing tragedy of "Ultima Thule." Yet "The Way Home" is much more than a mere connecting link; it is a solid and brilliant work in itself. The trilogy of which it is a part is probably the most important single piece of literature ever to come out of Australia; it takes its place among the handful of fiction masterpieces in English that have so far appeared in this century.

The title of "The Way Home" remains ambiguous, and is perhaps intentionally ironic. For Richard, dissatisfied with the raw and crude life of the colonies, has gone "home" to England. But he finds that he has been idealizing the mother country, and that he has become even more ill-adjusted to English ways than he was to colonial. In the charming little village of Buddlecombe, where he attempts to resume his practice, Mary and he encounter an almost incredible narrowness and snobbery, a wasps' nest of caste and prejudice, with social life divided into innumerable grades, a series of cliques, rising one above the other, and fitting as exactly as a set of Japanese boxes. The lower classes are as fawning as the higher are arrogant. The slightest breaches of etiquette—such as serving guests with somewhat too generous a supper—are not forgiven. It at length dawns upon Mahony that the very fact that he and Mary have lived in Australia has made them, in the eyes of these provincials, socially dubious, and the very fact that he has practiced in Australia has made his professional competence suspect. So once more he pulls up stakes and takes Mary back to the colonies, "home."

Arrived there, they learn that Richard's mining shares have enormously increased in value; he has become rich, is welcomed everywhere. He gives up his practice, only to become absorbed in his books, particularly in those on spiritualism, and to become, in time, more and more of a recluse. Their three children are born. Richard, growing restless again, takes Mary to England once more, and then traveling on the Continent. It is when they are at Venice that the blow falls which wipes out their fortune and compels Richard to leave again for Australia, this time alone.

The story seems commonplace enough when reduced to any blunt summary; but the importance of this trilogy does not rest on any originality of plot. It is a memorable picture, just, full, and unsparing, of pioneer Australia, its easy democracy, its energy, restlessness, vulgarity, its concern with the one aim of getting rich; and with the same impartiality it presents the contrasting picture of small-town English life. The character portrayal, particularly of Mary and Richard, but of many of the minor figures as well, is masterly. In "The Way Home," as in "Ultima Thule," we find Mary and Richard, after years of married life, still making discoveries about each other, subtly altering their relationship, slowly changing themselves, drifting apart in interests and attitudes. Their irritations, quarrels, reconciliations are handled with superb skill. Yet there are here virtually none of the ingredients that the average novelist thinks most essential for keeping his reader's interest alive, without which, in fact, he can hardly imagine a story at all—romance, adultery, or some variation of the everlasting triangle. Never once is Mary interested in another man, nor does she even toy with the idea of a flirtation; Richard indeed, at one moment, finds a woman who he imagines understands him better than Mary does, but the affair never drifts beyond the faintest platonic level. Despite the absence of this sexual element, despite an atmosphere of Victorianism that hangs over the novel, partly the result of its style and structure, partly because it is actually laid in the Victorian period, I can think of few English novels of our time which give so full and rich a picture of life. There is selection of incident and thought, of course, as there must be in all fiction, but it is a selection that reveals the two chief characters at last on all sides—their aversions, attachments, cultural interests, their most petty monetary worries and social anxieties, their daily routine, their friends and relationships—everything, in fact, that we know about our closest acquaintances, or that absorbs, fritters, directs, or inspires our own energies. Emerging from this work, we not only feel that we have almost lived the lives of these two people, but something more than that. Mahony, in the eyes of the world, never becomes distinguished; he dies a failure, even a madman; yet we never lose sight of his inner nobility and latent powers, and when we rise from this chronicle, life itself seems to have gained something in significance.

HENRY HAZLITT

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The British State

English Government and Politics. By Frederic Austin Ogg. The Macmillan Company. $4.25.

"THE English constitution," says Sir William Anson, is "a somewhat rambling structure and, like a house which many successive owners have altered just so far as suited their immediate wants or the fashion of the time, it bears the marks of many hands, and is convenient rather than symmetrical." His simile remains apt, but since he wrote, in the eighties of the last century, and especially during and since the war, the owners of the house have been proceeding with alterations so rapidly that all descriptions of it, including his own, are badly in need of revision. A new edition of the first volume of his "Law and Custom of the Constitution" was published in 1922, but the other two volumes have not been revised for more than twenty years. The latest edition of President Lowell's monumental "Government of England" takes no account of any developments subsequent to 1911. Professor Ogg is surely justified in saying that a new book on English government is warranted by "the remarkable changes in mechanism, function, and method which recent years have witnessed, and particularly by the fluidity of political arrangements in Britain today and the probability of further significant experiments and reconstructions in times immediately ahead."

Mr. Ogg's textbooks and other writings on European and American government and history are well known to students and have given him high standing among the political scientists of the country. But his latest work is drawn on a larger scale. If I am not mistaken, it is decidedly the most important as well as the most comprehensive book that he has written, and even if it were not strictly up to date, as it is, it would still be easily the best one-volume treatise on its subject. In the laborious business of gathering material he has been systematic as well as tireless, and a clear and organizing mind has enabled him to present the results of his study in orderly and readable fashion. He has successfully accomplished his purpose, which is to give an account of the English political system "on lines which will render it not only a reservoir of data on principles and processes but a living reality as a going concern." His primary aim is to describe existing political institutions and practices, but he gives considerable attention to problems and tendencies. Such chapters as those on Civil Service Methods and Problems, Second Chamber Reform, and Parliamentary Tendencies and Problems remind us that the constitution we are reading about is very much alive.

The author exemplifies throughout and in high degree the quality of disinterestedness. He is never opinionated and appears to have no axes to grind. He devotes several chapters to the English party system, but they give us no hint of how he would vote if he were an Englishman. Even in his references to the general strike he betrays no emotion. And his attitude toward that unhappy hunting-ground of embittered controversy, the Irish question, is fairly represented in this sentence: "All in all, the system of government [under the Union] was neither so bad as it was generally painted by Irishmen nor so good as complacent Britishers were wont to regard it." Important currents of opinion concerning political questions are brought into view, but when the author presents adverse criticism of political conditions and institutions it is usually the criticism of others, not his own.

In a work of this scope it is almost inevitable that there should be some errors of fact and some statements that call for reconsideration. Such *corrigenda* and *exploranda* as have been noted can easily be rectified when the book goes to a second edition; they are submitted here with that object in view. What Sir Thomas Smith said about the supremacy of Parliament required no special boldness on his part (page 35); for him Parliament was not an institution distinct from and potentially opposed to the sovereign. James II was not "obstinate and intolerant" (page 40); it would be nearer the truth to say that he was obstinately tolerant. The name that George III gloried in was that of "Briton," not "Englishman" (page 46). The concept of fundamental law, superior to the ordinary law, is much older than the sixteenth century (page 62). The first Labor Government was not in office for "upwards of a year" (pages 70 and 528). It was not an "English publicist," but De Lolme, who made the humorous remark about Parliament paraphrased on page 78. The reign of Edward I was not reckoned as dating from the death of his predecessor, nor did he remain uncrowned for four years (page 84). Accurately speaking, the prerogative power of the Crown to create life peerages has not disappeared (page 87); in the Wensleydale case, to which the author refers, the right was admitted, but it was denied that life peers were entitled to sit in the House of Lords. The Lord Privy Seal is not required by "inflexible custom" to be a member of the House of Lords (page 138); the office has been held several times by commoners and is held by one today. Coke, having died in 1634, could not have "testified" to anything in 1648 (page 381). Dicey did not maintain that Parliament was actually omnipotent, as the reader would be likely to infer from page 448. In view of the present state of parties in the House of Commons it seems strange to say that the chances of a Ministry being ousted by the House "have of late been steadily diminishing" (page 460). The Liberals were not defeated in a parliamentary election in 1842, nor did they regain office in 1847 (page 487). It is not clear what the author means by saying that the personal union of England and Scotland was able to "withstand" the establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty (page 683). It was not the British Parliament but the Irish Parliament that repealed Poynings's Law (page 690). South Africa should be excepted from the statement that the Dominions have been peopled primarily from the British Isles (page 747). An assertion is made on page 753 regarding British influence over Dominion legislation that is not in accord with the principles laid down by the Imperial Conference of 1926 and would not be indorsed by any Dominion statesman.

ROBERT LIVINGSTON SCHUYLER

Harsh Words

An Anthology of Invective and Abuse. Compiled by Hugh Kingsmill. The Dial Press. $2.

MR. KINGSMILL has done his work here with great competence. His selections include all the more celebrated English philippics, his notes set forth adequately the circumstances which brought them forth, and he chooses discreetly when it is necessary to isolate the essential from the nonessential, as in the case, for example, of Robert Buchanan's "The Fleshly School of Poetry." All persons with any trace of malice in them—which is to say, all persons not immersed in Trappist monasteries—will rejoice in this handy compendium. It includes almost everything of a caustic nature composed in England in three and a half centuries, from Francis Bacon's denunciation of the Earl of Essex to Lloyd George's Limehouse speech, and from William Prynne's diatribe against bobbed hair to H. G. Wells's assault upon Napoleon Bonaparte.

Unfortunately, it seldom leaves the bounds of the British Isles, and then to small purpose. The American section, for example, is short, and its contents are mainly feeble stuff—Robert G. Ingersoll on the Bible, Whistler on Ruskin, Mark Twain

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on Titian, and a few extracts from the forgotten Lincoln Catechism. One looks in vain for Griswold on Poe, Stuart P. Sherman on Dreiser, Roosevelt on Harriman, Mark Twain on J. Fenimore Cooper, Sumner on Jeff Davis, the old New York *Sun* on Roosevelt, and Wilson on the little group of wilful men. Is Lloyd George actually a master of invective? Then what of James A. Reed? I recall a dozen speeches by Reed that are more blistering than anything in this volume—more blistering, and altogether better. And in particular I recall his funeral sermon on the Wilson idealism, preached before a packed Senate chamber on the night of March 3, 1921. If England can show anything more devastating, then surely Mr. Kingsmill does not print it here.

There is also a complete absence of Continental examples—a very serious lack. Certainly Schopenhauer's attack upon women is far better than Prynne's, as Zola's "J'accuse" is better than Burke's indictment of Warren Hastings. But most of all I miss the immortal Section 62 of Nietzsche's "Der Antichrist," unquestionably the grandest and gaudiest abuse ever penned. The words, as Nietzsche himself said, deserve to be chalked on every wall, wherever there is a wall to chalk them on:

> Ich *verurtheile* das Christenthum, ich erhebe gegen die christliche Kirche die furchtbarste aller Anklagen, die je ein Ankläger in den Mund genommen hat. Sie ist mir die höchste aller denkbaren Corruptionen, sie hat den Willen zur letzten auch nur möglichen Corruption gehabt. Die christliche Kirche liess Nichts mit ihrer Verderbniss unberührt, sie hat aus jedem Werth einen Unwerth, aus jeder Wahrheit eine Lüge, aus jeder Rechtschaffenheit eine Seelen-Niedertracht gemacht.

And so on, and so on.

But maybe Mr. Kingsmill will bring out a second volume of his anthology later on.

H. L. Mencken

Conscience Makes Us Men

King Haber. By Alfred Neumann. Alfred H. King. $2.50.

A WRITER like Alfred Neumann, who deals almost entirely with codes, punctilios, quirks of honor, and the sharp tooth of conscience, strikes us at first glance as somewhat alien to his own times. We are forced, however, to put aside any suspicion that this author is trying to squeeze more drama than is legitimate out of human situations that are to all intents and purposes dead. His method is penetrating, beautiful, true, even though his kind of inner tribunal has been put to sleep by a generation that, while still perhaps admiring his English style, can make neither head nor tail of the high-minded motives that impel the characters of Joseph Conrad. Neumann bears a surface resemblance—but only a surface resemblance—to Mr. Thornton Wilder. In Neumann there is, however, less casuistry, and far more poetry and direct contact with people.

The present book contains three long short stories, two of which are laid in the beginning of the nineteenth century—one in Russia and the other in a small German ducal state. The third is narrated by a hunchbacked German schoolmaster who sees a sex crime committed by his assistant, a warped soul, and cowers away from the other as though he were (as indeed he is) his own tortured, devilish alter ego. Hounded by the evil within himself, the assistant at last shoots himself.

The two significant stories in the book are King Haber and The Patriot, both of which made the author's reputation in Germany, especially the latter, which was published before Neumann won the Kleist Prize for The Devil. King Haber and Conrad's Lord Jim have at least this in common: they are both predestined to follow an impossible ideal, achieving it in ways which they never even guessed at. King Haber is a Jewish banker who is ruthless in his purpose to set his son, borne to him by the reigning duchess, on the throne. His shall be the blood of kings. But the nobles rise up and conspire to thwart him. Cornered, hemmed in by a cordon of bloodthirsty enemies, with no possible egress, he causes the death of his own child (who had meanwhile been proclaimed heir apparent by the complaisant duke) and is himself the victim of a revolutionary mob. This form of death is self-chosen. Even the nobles recognize that by his courage, his fervent dream, his fearlessness before death he has become their peer.

The Patriot relates the murder of the Czar Paul as a result of a conspiracy headed by Count Pahlen. Pahlen has assured the Czarevitch that his father's death is not sought; only his abdication. He offers his own life as a pledge. The Czar is slain and Pahlen, waiting in an anteroom, kills himself.

In objectifying the subtle emotions and complex ideals of his characters Neumann uses a form of dramatic understatement that is highly charged with dire events. He is elliptical, but not monotonously so. He uses the sense of impendingness, which elsewhere I have noted in the dialogue of Mr. Hemingway, with the concision of a tragic poet.

Pierre Loving

The Southern Mill Worker

Some Southern Cotton Mill Workers and Their Villages. By Jennings J. Rhyne. University of North Carolina Press. $2.50.

CAPITALIST industry, when it bursts upon an economy of agriculture and small handicrafts, brings first an astonishing increase in production. Entrepreneurs rise to power and riches. Dislocations in economic life and exploitation of workers are forgotten in the swiftness and splendor of the spectacle of the new factories. A second stage is reached when the masters of industry, half sensing the inequities in the development, seek to enshrine their creed of individualism. Legislators, newspapers, clergymen, and economists agree with them heartily. The harshness of the doctrine is presently softened by acts of kindness toward the workers; when the fish begins to tug, a little more line is paid out to him, so that for the moment he forgets that he still has the hook in his mouth.

A third phase is reached in the democratic revolt against the operation of capitalism. This takes on many forms—abortive political protest, tardy legislative relief, an awakening charity in the middle class, growing demand for labor unionism, panaceas of social reform. Industry in the Southern States has unequivocally reached this third stage. The strikes which have occurred in the cotton mills in the last year, followed by the present widespread American Federation of Labor organizing campaign, leave no doubt of the arrival of the day of reckoning.

This makes Dr. Rhyne's realistic description of the life of the North Carolina cotton-mill workers in their villages important as a basis of judgment of future developments and policies. He has studied 500 families, with a total of 2,362 persons, in four types of mill villages of Gaston County. His sample is statistically adequate, and he has examined the social and economic characteristics of the groups and individuals with accuracy and ingenuity.

He seems to establish the fact, long suspected, that the workers are generally indifferent toward welfare work. He believes from his figures that the great majority of children in mill families go to work as soon as they reach fourteen. In

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85.6 per cent of the families there were no dependent children over fourteen, and in only 0.2 per cent of the cases were there two or more dependent children over fourteen. This may be taken to put a definite limit to mental and economic development. He shows that there are fewer wage-earners to each family than has been supposed; practically half the families had only one wage-earner, slightly over one-fourth had two, while 23.8 per cent had three or more. The male head of the family was gainfully employed in 96.7 per cent of the families where the father was still living.

The cotton mills of North Carolina employ a larger percentage of workers below the ages of 25 to 44 than do industries as a whole in that State, in Massachusetts, or in the United States. The wage data, liable to error because supplied by the workers themselves, showed an average weekly income per family of $28.65, a median of $25.43, and the modal $16.07. Families moving from village to village oftener than once a year comprised 21.6 per cent of the total, and 7.6 per cent moved at the rate of more than twice a year.

BROADUS MITCHELL

Books in Brief

An American Jezebel. By Helen Augur. Brentano's. $3.50.
Unafraid: A Life of Anne Hutchinson. By Winifred King Rugg. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

It is a good thing, every so often, to reexamine the growth of various forms of toleration in America. We are too prone either to fall into the error of believing that intolerance is a result of the World War and did not exist in the old days, or to assert that as far as religious freedom goes it has always existed in the United States, and that we thereby shame every country so backward as to have an established church. Let it be said at once that in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the latter half of the seventeenth century there existed one of the tightest, most unreasoning, and most merciless theocracies that ever flourished anywhere. Thither came Mistress Anne Hutchinson, wife of William Hutchinson, gent., of Lincolnshire, eager to hear again the preaching of her beloved leader, John Cotton. She was full of zeal not only for the performance of every housewifely task, including the bearing and rearing of some ten children, but for God and His son, Jesus Christ. She brought the fresh winds of direct and personal revelation into the Calvinistic rigidities of the colony. Her "Covenant of grace," as opposed to the more regular "Covenant of works" of the church's governors, got her into trouble, and because she was too brilliant an expositor of her doctrines not to be listened to she was finally excommunicated with all due infamy. Miss Augur has told Mrs. Hutchinson's story with great understanding and pity, as well as with appreciation of her gifts as a preacher and as a woman. She has written a stirring book without resorting unduly to fictionizing; she has made of her heroine a thoroughly sympathetic figure, difficult to live with, perhaps, but none the less admirable for that. Miss Rugg's is a much less competent book, spoiled in particular by long, imaginary conversations between Mrs. Hutchinson and her husband, her friends, and her God.

This Is My Body. By Margery Latimer. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. $2.50.

We have had no social revolution; but the sexual revolution has come irresistibly and has been won largely by woman. In "This Is My Body" Miss Latimer, whose early work showed promise and a certain eagerness, has given us in Megan Foster one of the heroines of this more or less perceived, but formidable, transition. Megan from the very beginning is simply and naturally imbued with the joyous principles of the irrepressible

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Dr. Samuel Schmalhausen. She revolts against her family. She is a rebel at college. She says: "I love life—I want life. . . . Oh, oh, I have to know a man." And to the first man she meets: "I want to know about life . . . reality." At page 74 she has advanced to: "I feel white, I feel empty." And not long after: "Oh Gerald, I'm burning—I'm burning!" In her search for reality (life?), little Megan moves forward always in a straight line until she finds it; and then, obviously, the emptiness within her is filled.

Testamento Literario. Por Armando Palacio Valdés. Madrid: Victoriano Suárez. 4 pesetas.

Armando Palacio Valdés is a contemporary of Pérez Galdós, José Maria de Pereda, Emilia Pardon Bazán, Leopoldo Alas—the noble group which had made Spanish letters at the beginning of the century the peer of any in the world. All these other authors are gone, but the creator of "José" and "La Hermana San Sulpicio" has lived on to a hale old age, and still writes readable stories in his gentle nineteenth-century manner. His "Literary Testament" is a collection of essays on the writer's vocation, the attitude he should take toward such matters as family, friends, politics, hygiene, reputation, money, and the like, on Catholic orthodoxy, morality, optimism—all sweetened with naive humor and phrased in a calm and beautiful Spanish which is a welcome relief from the gallicized lingo of a large part of the younger writing generation in Spain. Valdés has a delightful gift of apposite allusion which is not seriously marred by his habit of inaccurate quotation.

Music

A "Spiritual" Concerto

THE Schola Cantorum ended its season with a noble display of new works. Although, like matrimonial advertisements, its concert was better on paper than face to face, it contained three exquisite madrigals of Monteverde excellently done, a folk song of Joaquin Nin for the brilliant voice of Adele Vasa and women's chorus (the most beautiful new piece on the program), and the much-heralded Spiritual Concerto of the Russian Arthur Lourié. This was scored for piano, barytone solo, brass, contrabassi, and chorus, with a text from the Exultet of the Ambrosian Easter Vigil and part of the Forty-second Psalm. It was called a "vision of mystical progression."

It proved exciting and baffling. For despite the superb playing of Denyse Molié and the careful direction of Hugh Ross the piece missed fire. It seemed loaded with significance that usually remained obscure. One felt it was often on the point of some astonishing revelation, that clouds would open and the God of Abraham, Kant, and Mr. Eddington be discovered in an atomic radiance. Indeed, to the text "deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts" the mixture of terror and joy proclaimed in the program notes certainly took shape as, against shattering piano rhythms, the choral voices rose upon a prolonged and awesome crescendo. There was a sense of sundering dimensions, of the breaking through of strange lights and immense vistas, the swirling disintegration of normal perception attributed to the mystic before he loses himself in cosmic consciousness. Here the music should have stopped. No temple could have adequately crowned those stairs. Unfortunately it continued, and the work ended in throat-splitting and painful bathos.

This work is the opposite of Mr. Prokofieff's brilliant and empty concerto, recently mentioned. Mr. Lourié was obviously

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WITHIN THE FORTNIGHT

Plays to See

†A Month in the Country—Guild—52nd St., W. of B'dway.
†Apple Cart—Alvin—52nd St., W. of B'dway.
*Civic Repertory—14th St., W. of Sixth Ave.—See Advertisement.
Ruth Draper—Comedy—41st St., E. of B'dway.
‡Flying High—Apollo—W. 42nd St.
*Hotel Universe—Beck—45th St., E. of Eighth Ave.
‡Jonica—Craig—54th St., E. of B'dway.
*The Green Pastures—Mansfield—47th St., W. of B'dway.
*The Last Mile—Sam H. Harris—42nd St., W. of B'dway.
†Topaze—Music Box—45th St., W. of B'dway.
*Uncle Vanya—Cort—W. 48th St.

Films

Journey's End—Gaiety—46th St. and B'dway.
All Quiet on the Western Front—Central—47th St. and B'dway.
Old and New—Cameo—42nd St. and B'dway.
Asphalt—55th St. Playhouse—E. of 7th Ave.
Bishop Murder Case and Two Arabian Knights—Beg. May 4—Fifth Ave. Playhouse—66 Fifth Ave.
The Last of Mrs. Cheney—Beg. May 2; Slightly Scarlet—Beg. May 6—Little Picture House—50th St.. E. of Lexington Ave.
Christina—Beg. Apr. 30; Hearts in Dixie and South Sea Rose—Beg. May 3—Film Guild—52 W. Eighth St.
Anna Christie—Beg. May 3—Little Carnegie Playhouse—146 W. 57th St.

Lectures

This Cockeyed World—Community Church—34th St. and Park Ave., Fri. Eve., May 2—Under auspices of Discussion Guild.
Love in the Machine Age—The Group—150 W. 85th St.—Tues. Eve., May 6th.
Symposium "The New Generation"—Town Hall—Mon. Eve., May 5th.

*Drama. †Comedy. ‡Musical.

moved by what he had to say. Why then did he fail—save once—to move his hearers? Perhaps for one of two reasons. An artist's medium is the common denominator between his own emotional conviction and that of his audience. As he works over his subject, seeking to reduce its material to the simplest means that can support its content, he may pass the point of balance between creator and perceiver and go on to an exaggerated simplification. The medium becomes increasingly adequate to him through familiarity, and he pares it down until it is no longer rich enough to carry his ideas and emotions to the spectator. The result is understatement—a sufficiently rare vice to make us hope that if this is the concerto's fault, Mr. Lourié's future works will correct it. One hopes, too, that Mr. Lourié will not fall into the error of loading his music with arbitrary meanings, or push esotericism too far, for his sincerity is undoubted. It is too rare a quality to be shut away in specialized chambers for the mystically elect.

HUBBARD HUTCHINSON

Drama

Lillian Gish Keeps a Secret

THE audience which gathered to see "Uncle Vanya" produced at the Cort Theater could probably be divided without great difficulty into two groups, the first being composed of those who came to see Chekhov's play and the second of those who were curious to learn if Miss Lillian Gish is really an actress or merely a puppet which happened to acquire renown in one of the various mysterious ways associated with the movies. The first of these groups was certainly rewarded, for "Uncle Vanya" is a play no less rich than the others which came from the same pen, but those who were anxious to answer the question about Miss Gish must have come away nearly as puzzled as they were when they went.

It is not, be it understood, that the performance is bad, for if it were then our doubts would at least be resolved. The fact of the matter is, however, that she manages most adroitly to sidestep the question, that the role which has been assigned her and the interpretation which she has been allowed to give to it are such that we are no more sure than we were in the days when she was the particular star of the great Mr. Griffith whether she has real talents or merely certain odd deficiencies which a skilful director can utilize after the fashion of the marionette master and the character doll. There was always something negative about her, and Helena, as Miss Gish plays her, fits all too well the personality of the actress as it has been hitherto revealed, for she is little except an enigma. No one knows why she married the aging and tedious professor, no one knows why she remains faithful to him, and no one knows what kind of character, if any, she has. She is beautiful in a quaint, angular, and anemic sort of way. She confesses gently that she has no intelligence to speak of and no particular interest in anything whatsoever. And though she is, to be sure, kindly enough, it is hard to say whether or not that kindliness is due to more than an absence of passion so complete that not even malice is possible. Helena, in a word, remains merely a shell, and so does the actress who portrays her. Chekhov never tells us whether or not there is anything positive behind the mysterious reserve of his character, and Miss Gish never allows us to see whether she is acting a role or merely behaving in her accustomed fashion—which is all very well so far as this particular performance is concerned, but which leaves the question of her ability as an actress exactly where it was before she made her first appearance upon the legitimate stage. One is

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merely reminded of the fact that some sphinxes have secrets and some have not.

As to the play itself, no one familiar with Chekhov's other work needs to have described again either his charm or his peculiar melancholy humor. This particular piece is called a comedy, and if by comedy one means a tale which ends in general happiness or lovers' meetings then the title is hardly deserved. But if, on the other hand, one means by the term a work which accepts human weakness as the basis of its effect and its philosophy then the right to the description is richly earned. "Uncle Vanya" exists in order that full-length portraits may be drawn of certain delightful but absurd eccentrics such as only Chekhov's tolerant but unrelenting analysis could make real—of the pompous professor who has spent twenty-five years lecturing about things which "the intelligent knew already and the stupid weren't interested in" and of the pockmarked dependent, Waffles, who boasts that he is happy only to be told that he lies, that, as a matter of fact, the reason everybody loves him is simply that he is unhappier than everybody else. Such company is neither brilliant nor exciting, but when seen through the keen, gentle, and almost passionless eyes of Chekhov it is as interesting as any company could be. He neither admires, nor lectures, nor despises them. He is neither sentimentalist, nor satirist, nor cynic. And yet there is something which inspires in him both a profound interest and a complete understanding. Is that something, perhaps, the fact that he was so much a part of the generation he described that he heard always in his ear a whisper which said, "There but for the grace of God go I"?

In a generally excellent production the work of Walter Connolly as Uncle Vanya and of Osgood Perkins as the doctor stands out—which is odd enough in view of the fact that the first has been associated chiefly with popular farces and the second with "hard-boiled" melodramas.

"Lady Clara" (Booth Theater) is a mild but amusing comedy about a cockney girl who discovers herself to be the daughter of an earl. For a time the audience is kept in pleasant doubt whether the plot is going to take its cue from "Pygmalion" or "Peg o' My Heart," but the girl not unwisely decides that a humble station is preferable to the course of discipline required to make a lady of her. Florence Nash plays the heroine with much humor.

"Penal Law 2010" (Biltmore Theater) is as unspeakably bad as plays produced by the author generally are, while as for "Room 349" (National Theater) it must try to get along without comment from me. A last-minute postponement on the part of the management made it impossible for me to attend. From the reports, however, I judge that the apparently unfortunate combination of events was a blessing in disguise.

Joseph Wood Krutch

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